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# GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE



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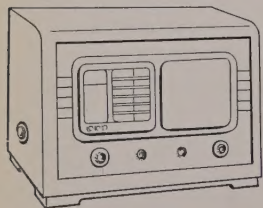
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# An African Olympus

by LAURENS VAN DER POST

*Colonel van der Post, a South African born, has the gift of conveying to others that sense of the Dark Continent's magic which belongs to men with Africa in their blood. The following extracts are from his book Venture to the Interior, published last month by The Hogarth Press, describing a recent journey made, at Government request, to investigate little-known territory in Nyasaland*

By the time we had inspected the road and admired the view it was close on three o'clock, and we were all glad to make a bee-line for the forestry hut.

It stood on a high grass-gold mound in the central gash of the valley. There was a wide, clear stream, and a darker fringe of immense cedars round the bottom of the mound. As we made our way slowly towards it, the afternoon light turned it purple and it looked rather like some kind of unadorned velvet set in a crown of be-metalled cedars. On either side of the stream there were long slopes of golden grass, speeding away and up to where three miles farther on, perpendiculars of solid grey cliffs, smooth and shining like the bark of a blue-gum tree, rose two to three thousand feet above the floor of the valley. All round the cliff-tops the mist continued to sag heavily.

The hut itself was built of crossed-cedar beams, lath and plaster. It had a roof of cedar shingles, a little cedar veranda at the back, cedar floor-boards, and, I was to find, a few pieces of crude cedar furniture as well. It burned cedar logs whose flame and smoke added to the cold air their own variants of the generic all-pervasive scent. The smoke rose straight up for some hundreds of feet, wavered, and then curved slowly back on its course, until it looked like a feathery question mark stuck into the roof of the hut.

"What do you think of it?" Vance asked, pointing a proud possessive finger.

"I must congratulate you on having the only genuine Tudor building I have seen in Africa. It looks charming and absolutely right," I said, and was delighted to hear laughter break through in him again.

"By gosh!" he said. "You're right. It is a bit Ye Olde Hutte-ish, I must tell Val."

His wife, Valerie Vance, "Val" as he and Quillan both called her, had just fed her two-months-old baby Penelope when we arrived. The child was in a wicker basket asleep on the table by the fire whose light flickered over a puckered little face with tightly clenched eyes. The room was in a sort of

twilight, warm and gay with the flame and explosive splutter of the burning cedar logs.

As we walked into it the warmth of it set my ears and face tingling. It was both dining-room and kitchen—there was only one other room in the hut. Val herself just then was cooking a meal for us over a large open hearth.

As she came to meet us, flushed with the heat of the fire, I thought how very young she looked, little more in fact than an attractive, vivacious schoolgirl. As she held her hand out to me the light from the door behind me fell full on her. She had the clear eyes and skin of someone who looked as if she had never lived anywhere else except in the hills. She seemed a deeply contented and happy person, but gave me her hand shyly and, I fear, with some apprehensive reservations that I couldn't fathom. Her greeting of Quillan was more confident but completely impersonal.

"You will forgive me," she said, in a pleasant, matter-of-fact tone, "if I go on with the cooking. Dicky's had nothing to eat since dawn and you too must be hungry."

"Can't you two get a servant to cook for you, Val?" said Quillan. "It is much too much for you. If you can't, I'll see that you get one at once."

Val stood up from the fire and turned round to give him a slow, shy but determined look, full of meaning, and said:

"I do not want a servant, thank you. Dicky has brought me several, but I don't want them. I do not like anybody cooking for my husband and my child except myself. I do not want anyone even to come in and sweep, and make our beds. I want to do it myself. It is just perfect as it is."

"That is quite true," Vance commented, as if underlining a basic law of life. "She doesn't like anybody else in the house."

Again that sickening sense of intrusion, but what could I do about it now?

Although they pressed me politely to pitch a bed with Quillan in the room with the fire, I refused. As soon as we had some food, I





Camera Press

*The peaks of Mount Mlanje, close to the Mozambique border in southern Nyasaland, seen (in the background to the right) from a neighbouring tea estate. They reach a height of nearly 10,000 feet*

went and pitched my tent on a level patch of grass about seventy-five yards from the hut and made myself as independent and self-contained as possible. But they insisted on my eating in the hut, and I had to compromise by getting them to take over some of my supplies.

That evening the mist left us. It was apparently a pure product of the sun, of the evaporation that the immense heat causes in the great plains below and its condensation in the cool air round Mlanje's peaks. But the moment the sun went, the mist scurried after it. And it was cold.

We all sat close round the fire and watched those lovely cedar logs burning with an eagerness that belonged to the world when it was yet young. Round about nine o'clock it began to freeze and the fire leapt with the same sort of little independent, purple flames,

which make farmers in the winter in England exclaim: "My word! Look at that fire! It's going to freeze to-night."

We, or at least Quillan and Vance, talked about trees and forests and their problems, and Val and I listened. I was happy not to speak because I was tired. I preferred to listen and to watch.

Those two children, for so I thought of them, interested me enormously. I had never seen two human beings more complementary, more sufficient unto themselves than those two. She hardly ever took her eyes off him, except now and then to look at Quillan or me to see what effect her husband's remarks were having on us. He frequently would refer to her for confirmation, would stop half-way through a statement and say: "Isn't that so, Val?" or "You noticed it too, Val!" and so on. They never seemed to cease for a second



being aware of each other.

When I got up at ten and said "Good night", Vance came some of the way to the tent with me. The sky was intensely black; pure black, if there is such a thing. The stars were unusually large and clear: so full of light that they seemed to be spilling it over pointed rims, as Vance would have it, "buckets-full at a time".

The night crackled and vibrated with their being; throbbed as it were with an urgent message, a quick, excited, electric, morse-code of stars.

"It looks," I said to Vance, "as if your stars up here burn cedar logs as well."

"By Jove," he said with a deep laugh: "I wouldn't be surprised if they do. Never thought of it. I must tell Val."

I could see, now that my eyes were used to the night, the dark outline of the peaks three miles away. They looked much nearer. How cold it was. I felt Vance shivering near me.

"I think you ought to go back now," I said to him. "It's much too cold and I am nearly there. Look!"

I pointed to where my tent, faintly illuminated by a hurricane lamp, was beginning to show up in the dark.

"Yes: I think I had better, but . . ." Vance began and paused. His teeth were now chattering. I was shivering myself.

"Yes?" I said, turning round to face him.

"I hope you won't mind my saying this," he resumed with an impetuous diffidence. "I hope you won't mind, but look, you are not going to take all this away from us, are you?"

"How could I? And why should I?" I said.

"I don't know," he said miserably. "I don't know, but the feeling seems to be that you might want to use Mlanje for something other than forestry?"

I reassured him as best I could. I said I had not seen Mlanje, had no preconceived notions about it, but judging only from what I had seen that day, it seemed obvious that whatever happened very special provisions would have to be made for the cedars and their rejuvenation. But it seemed to be a tremendous mountain and there might be room for other things

besides cedars.

"It is big enough," he said sadly. "It's big enough! That's the trouble. But you know, anything else, particularly sheep or cows, would spoil it. They wouldn't belong. It should all be re-covered with cedars from end to end, as it once was."

I could almost see the earnestness on his face in the dark and I was moved more than I can say by his concern. I put my hand on his shoulder.

"Don't let us take any fences before we get to them," I suggested as gently as I could. "I am sure it will be all right. We'll see that your cedars are all right anyway. Now you had better get back. It is too cold for you here. Your teeth are chattering like a monkey's. Good night, and please don't worry."

I waited and shone my torch along the track for him until he was back in the hut. I don't know why, but I watched his sturdy, mountaineer figure disappear into the hut with some misgivings. Again I wondered





why, ever since I had first discussed Mlanje in Nyasaland, sooner or later, some form of mis-giving always arose.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our camp was a disused, discarded lumber camp, the huts which had originally housed the native timber carriers. Once again, as often before in Africa, I thanked Providence for the African hut-builder. These insignificant-looking, brown beehive huts one dashes past by car or train in Africa are amazing. Considering the poor material, the lack of scientific equipment and research, the lack of education of their humble builders, they are works of genius. Although the rain now pounded down so violently, not a drop came through the ancient thatch.

When we had recovered sufficiently, we went round to inquire after our bearers and found them, also under dry roofs, cooking their dinners round crackling cedar fires. They were a happy and cheering sight.

We told Leonard to stay with them in the dry. We did not want him splashing round in the wet, trying to wait on us. We went back, dried ourselves out thoroughly, and did our own cooking. I made a kettleful of hot coffee which we drank very sweet, laced liberally with my medicinal cognac. The cognac was a great improvement on the Portuguese brandy and a welcome and complete surprise. It was precisely the anticipation of moments like these that had made shopping in Blantyre such fun, and I drew a glow of reassurance from this slight justification of my planning.

We ate in silence. I myself was too full of an unutterable sense of well-being to attempt to speak. I think the others perhaps felt something else as well, for they both, particularly Vance, looked somewhat reproved by the experience of the day. Then silently we stretched ourselves out beside the fire, with a good heart, to sleep.

But I was too tired to sleep at once. I lay with my ear close to the ground and listened to the rain drumming down on the mountain. Among those vast peaks there was no other sound than this continuous, violent, down-pouring of the rain. There was no light of stars or far-off reflection of town or hamlet; only the dying glow of the cedars from a dying world of trees. The night, the mountain and the rain were woven tightly into a dark pre-human communion of absolute oneness. No leopard, pig or antelope or elastic mountain gazelle would venture out on a night like this. It is precisely against moments like these that the leopards bury some

portion of bird, bush ape or pig, and leave it near their holes and caves. The summons riding the mountains with such desperate dispatch was not for animal or human hearts. But it was as if the earth underneath my head was slowly beginning to respond to this drumming, this insistent beat of the rain; to take up this rhythm of the rain; to answer this ceaseless knocking at its most secret door, and to open itself to this vast orchestration of its own natural, primeval elements, to begin to quicken its own patient pulse, and deep inside itself, in the core of its mountain, its Jurassic heart, to do a tap-dance of its own. Whenever I rose in the night to make up the fire there was the rain and this manner of the rain; and when I lay down again there was this deep, rhythmical response of the earth.

We woke finally at five and talked over the day while waiting for the kettle to boil. Our plan originally had been to go over the top of the mountain in the direction of Chambe. But we found now that our experience of the day before among the peaks on the far side of the Ruvo valley had made us all decide in the night against any more adventures in the clouds while the Chiperrone was blowing. In this way the previous day influenced our behaviour. Our guide well knew the way and, had it not been for that short-cut, I do not believe we would have changed our plans.

Vance now said he knew an easy way down off the mountain which led to a large tea estate at the bottom. Quillan said he knew it too, it was the old timber carriers' track. It was steep, but cut out in the side of the Great Ruvo gorge and clearly defined. We could not go wrong. Only it meant abandoning the last part of the trip and that, he thought, would be a pity for me. I said firmly, "Abandon." Vance then decided to go ahead to the tea estate and get a truck to take us round by road to Likabula. With luck, he said, we could all be back on the mountain at Chambe that evening.

With our last eggs I made him a quick omelette for breakfast, and sent him off in the rain. Quillan and I followed slowly with the carriers.

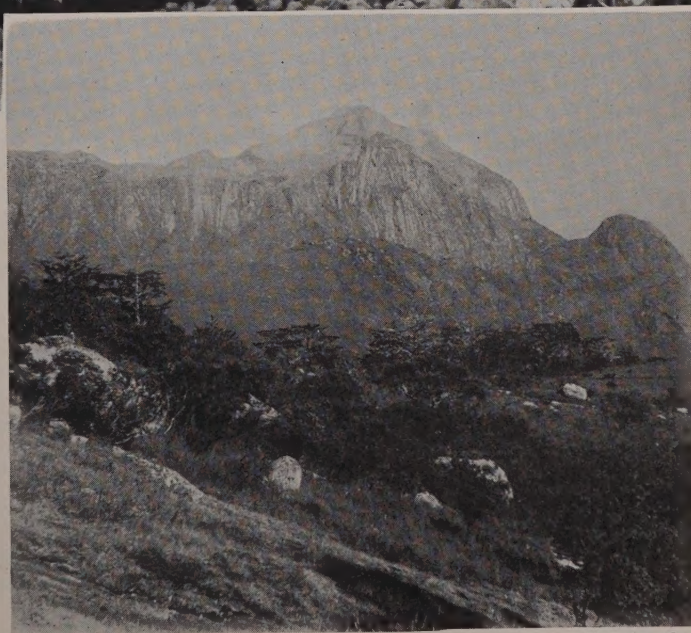
We set out at eight but the rain was so thick and violent that there was only a dim, first-light around us. We went slowly. The track was steep and highly dangerous. On the left of us, only a yard or so away, was that deep cleft down to the Great Ruvo gorge. The bearers too had great difficulty with their loads. They had to lower themselves down from one level to another by cedar roots and help one another down perilous mud precipices.





ra Press

(Above) A wooden footbridge over the gorge of the Ruu River. (Right) Mist-shrouded Chambe Peak, on the northern side of Mount Mlanje: "perpendiculars of solid grey cliffs, smooth and shining", with an outlying fringe of the cedar forests



From the author



As we went down, the noise of falling water all round us became deafening. Whenever there was a slight lift of the rain and mist, the half-light, the mepacrine gloom on the mountain would be suddenly illuminated by a broad, vivid flash of foaming white water leaping down the face of smooth black cliffs, thousands of feet high. We had to shout in places to make ourselves heard.

Moreover the mountain itself, the very stones on which we trod, the mud wherein we slid, seemed to begin to vibrate and tremble under this terrible pounding of water. At moments when we rested, the ground shook like a greaser's platform in the engine-room of a great ship. This movement underfoot, combined with the movement of the flashing, leaping, foaming water in our eyes, and driving rain and swirling mists, gave to our world a devastating sense of instability. The farther down we went, the more pronounced it became, until I began to fear that the whole track would suddenly slither like a crocodile from underneath my feet and leave me falling for ever under the rain and Mlanje's cataclysmic water. It needed a conscious effort of will to keep me upright, and I found this all the more difficult because of a new complication that was arising. I began to feel as if my very senses were abandoning their moorings inside myself.

Luckily this stage of the journey did not last too long. Two-and-a-quarter hours later our track suddenly became easier and broader.

Quillan said, "We'll soon be off it now."

We came round a bend in the track and there, to our surprise, was Vance. He was sitting at the side of a fast stream of water which was pouring over the track and had evidently held him up. He was joining some lengths of creeper, of monkey rope, together.

"I didn't want to cross this stream without a rope," he said. "I have been up and down this stream as far as possible and this is the best place to try it. It doesn't look difficult. Do you think this will do?"

He handed me his rope of creepers.

"No! Certainly not," I said, and looked at the stream.

Its beginnings, above us, were lost in the mist and rain. Then it suddenly appeared out of the gloom about a hundred yards above, charging down at us at a steep angle, and finally, just before it reached us, smashing itself up behind a tremendous rock, deeply embedded on the side of the gorge. Somewhere behind the rock it reassembled its shattered self and emerged from behind it

flowing smoothly. For about twenty yards it looked a quiet, well-behaved stream but, on our left at the track's edge, it resumed its headlong fall into the terrible main Ruo gorge below us. I now went to this edge and looked over, but the falling water vanished quickly in the gloom and told me nothing. Only the ground shook with the movement as my eyes and head ached with the noise.

I came back and found Quillan lighting a fire.

"Our bearers are nearly dead with cold," he explained. "They'll crack up if we don't do something. Two woodcutter blokes died here of exposure two years ago. But if I can get this fire going for them in the lee of this rock, our chaps will be all right."

The rain poured down even more heavily than before, and it looked darker than ever. The shivering Negroes, the bamboos bent low with rain, the black rocks, were like figures and things moving in the twilight of a dream.

Again I went and looked at the stream above. Vance appeared to have chosen rightly. The stream was swollen but did not look dangerous at that point, particularly with a good rope. Higher up it would have been hopeless.

"I tell you, Dicky," I said. (It was the first time I had called him that and I don't know why I did, except that we all suddenly seemed to be very close to one another.) "I tell you what, Dicky. We'll take all our ropes, you knot them together and then I'll go across. I am bigger than you."

"I don't think that is necessary," he said. "I know the way. You don't. And with a rope it will be easy."

We joined up the ropes, tested the result in every way, pulling it, leaning on it. It seemed tight and strong. We took Vance's valise straps and added them to the end, just in case. I then tied it round Vance's chest with a knot that couldn't slip. I made sure it could not tighten and hinder his breathing.

As I tied it I said, "Dicky, are you sure you are happy about this and know how to do it, for if you are not I would much rather do it myself?"

"Of course I know," he said with a deep laugh. "I have done it scores of times in Burma. And I must hurry. I want to get those poor black devils under shelter as soon as I can."

"Well, remember," I said, "keep your face to the stream; always lean against it; go into it carefully and feel well round your feet with your stick before you move."

He took up the stout stick that we had cut



for him. I called Quillan and two of the bearers. Quillan and I took the rope. I braced my feet against a tree on the edge of the stream, just in case, but I was not at all worried.

Vance waded in. The water came about to his navel. He went steadily on for some distance then, to my bewilderment, turned his back slightly on the stream. It was the first deviation from plan.

He took another step or two, stopped, suddenly abandoned his stick to the stream and yelled to us, "Let out the rope!"

It was the second deviation from plan. I was horrified. What the hell was he up to? Before we had even properly grasped his meaning he had thrown himself on the stream and was swimming a breast-stroke. As was inevitable, the stream at once caught him and quickly swept him to where it foamed and bubbled like a waterfall over the edge of the track. The unexpected speed with which all of this had happened was the most terrifying thing about it. Even so, Vance had got to within a foot of the far bank, was on the verge of reaching it—when the water swept him over the edge and he disappeared from our view.

Quillan and I were braced for the shock. As we saw it coming we both shouted for the bearers, who rushed to our assistance in a body. The rope tightened in a flash. The strain was tremendous. Vance's body, no longer water-borne but suspended out of sight, below the edge of the rocky track, with the weight and stream of water pouring on top of it, strained the rope to the utmost. Yet it held.

I think it would have continued to hold if the angle and violent impact of the water on the body had not now with incredible speed whipped Vance along the sharp edge of the rocks, swung him from the far side over towards our bank and chafed the rope badly in the process. It still held for a second or two. We worked our way along it towards him—were within two yards of him—when the rope snapped.

At that moment we knew that he was dead. Anyone who stood with us in the black rain, amid those black cliffs in that world of storming, falling, rushing, blind water, must have known that he was dead. Quillan turned round, lifted a face to me naked and bare with misery, and said hoarsely, "What to do, now? He is dead, you know!"

I nodded and said, "Please take a search-party as far as you can, Peter, and see what you can see."

He immediately set out. I called Leonard and some bearers and started to undo our baggage. It was obvious we could not cross now. We had lost all our rope; we had lost one body with a rope, we could not risk losing one without a rope. Nor could we stay there.

Quillan was back almost at once. I was not surprised. We were, as I have said before, on the edge of the Great Ruo gorge.

He shook his head. "Not a sign, not a hope. He is dead and there is nothing we can do now except to see that these fellows don't conk out."

He indicated the bearers.

We called them all round us. They were cold and terribly shaken by Vance's death. One old man was crying and they were all shivering as if with malaria. We told them to dump their loads and to start back up the mountain to the huts we had slept in the night before. A moan of despair rose up from them. They said they wanted to sit by the river, wanted to make a fire and wait for the sun. But I knew that that only meant that the spirit had gone out of them, that they had given up hope and were resigned to do no more than sit down and die in comfort.

It was then that Leonard, the puny plainsman, the sophisticated native from the towns, stood up, unsolicited, and lashed them with his tongue. I don't know what he said, but he insulted them into some shape of spirit.

We distributed all our own and Vance's clothes among them. That cheered them. They began to laugh and to tease one another, at the sight of their companions in tennis shirts, grey sweaters too big for them, in green, blue, red and grey striped pyjamas, and my own green jungle bush-shirts with their red 15 Corps flashes still on them.

I expect it was an incongruous sight in that world of rain, falling water and black, impersonal rock, but I did not find it at all funny. It seemed to me to fill the cup of our misery to overflowing. I expect whatever gods sit on this African Olympus might well find it amusing to kill a young man of twenty-eight in order to dress up some of the despised, ubiquitous outcasts of their African kingdom in silk pyjamas in the pouring rain. To me, just to kill was bad enough; to mock the kill an intolerable perfection of tragedy. I came near to joining in Quillan's tears at that moment, but fortunately I got angry as well, so angry that I believe if my strength had matched my rage I could have picked up the whole of Mlanje and thrown it over the edge of the world into the pit of time itself.



# New England

by D. W. BROGAN

*Familiar to a very wide public for his ability to answer abstruse questions about America in the "Transatlantic Quiz", Professor Brogan is respected by scholars on both sides of the Atlantic for the knowledge of American institutions shown in his numerous works. He was educated in part at Harvard, New England's oldest University, and is now Professor of Political Science at Cambridge*

THERE can be a good deal in a name and the name "New England" has undoubtedly misled many a traveller and many a stay-at-home traveller as well. For few parts of the United States are *physically* less like old England than the New England States. Parts of Pennsylvania recall the home counties; parts of Oregon recall Devon; but New England recalls no part of the British Isles, not even the most stony parts of Scotland or Ireland. New England has a character, a marked physical character, but it is most decidedly not an English character. Indeed, few landscapes have less in common than those of New England and of that East Anglia from which most of the founders came.

If the physical environment is different, the social and moral environment still bears the marks of the most purely English settlements made in what is now the United States. For that New England was, till just over a century ago. From their foundation, New Netherland, New Sweden, before they became New York and Delaware, were necessarily cosmopolitan. So was Pennsylvania, one of whose earliest settlements bears the name of Germantown. In the South, there was the important Huguenot settlement in South Carolina and everywhere there were the Negroes. But apart from some Huguenots in Boston and Negroes in Rhode Island, the New England colonies were projections of old England. True, in the 18th century, there was a movement of "Scotch-Irish", Ulster Presbyterians, into the back country of New Hampshire, but until the great immigrant waves of the 19th century, New England was overwhelmingly English.

It has changed today. Over the border, from what was New France, have come hundreds of thousands of "Canadiens" whose descendants now number nearly two millions and are the greatest single block in Rhode Island and in some counties of Maine, New Hampshire and western Massachusetts. In the middle 19th century came the Irish and Boston is still the most Irish city in the United States. Then came Italians and Poles, to the

cotton mills and to the tobacco fields of Connecticut; and even in the fishing ports there are now more Portuguese than "Yankee" sailors.

Yet it is most noteworthy how deep the mark of the early settlers has been, how traditions and institutions have moulded the newcomers, how styles of architecture and cooking, education and speech, have survived the melting-pot. And it is in this way that New England is truly New English. As we all know, the early settlers were mostly religious zealots seeking immunity from Anglican oppression at home and, in most cases, the chance to do a little oppressing themselves. Of course, many settlers were tepid Laodicean types and a close investigation of the reasons why some early settlers left England would produce the same results as corresponding research in Virginia or Australia. There were, too, open rebels against Puritan conformity like "Morton of Merrymount". But when all allowances are made, New England was founded and marked by men who had firm and clear views of man's destiny and were ready to impose a pattern of behaviour on their neighbours and on themselves. New England is still a Puritan commonwealth or set of commonwealths, if some forms that the Puritanism takes owe more to old Ireland than to Old England.

The next influence on the way of life and the appearance of New England was the predominantly East Anglian origin of the first settlers. True, there was an important West of England contingent, represented by place-names like Dorchester. Hamilton, Dublin, Berlin represent other strains or tastes, but the representative (non-Indian) place-names tell the story: Haverhill, Braintree, Cambridge, and of course, leading all the rest, Boston. There are scriptural names, too, like Salem and names like Concord and Providence that tell of aspirations and hopes, but as far as there is one area which is the cradle of New England it is East Anglia.

The world to which the East Anglians





*The New England farm, with its rock-besprinkled soil,  
on which for the early settlers everything else depended*

Foster, Rhode Island





*The New England winter : of a severity unknown in Old England, keeping men and beasts indoors for many months*

Annisquam, Massachusetts





*The spring: winter into summer with a sudden burst of  
life and warmth—the snow and ice gone in a few days*

Monroe, New Hampshire





*The austere charm of the white-and-green New England villages: houses of painted clapboard on timber frames, white-painted wooden fences, avenues of American elms*

Kennebunkport, Maine





*The elegant classical design of the country churches,  
built entirely of timber in a distinctively American  
style derived from the English 18th-century architects*

Old Bennington, Vermont





*The little harbours of the much-indented New England coastline, where stout ships were built and mariners and merchants bred, trading far into all the oceans*

Camden, Maine





*The comfortable homes to which the merchants retired  
with their hard-earned fortunes: solid ancestors of  
many families still prominent in American life today*

Chestnut Street, Salem, Massachusetts





*Harvard and Yale, two of the earliest American universities, were founded in New England. Both of them were helped by gifts made by Englishmen after whom they were named. Yale, which celebrated last year its 250th anniversary, assumed in 1718 the name of Elihu Yale, who, born in America, became governor of the East India Company's settlement at Madras*

Pierson College, Yale University; New Haven, Connecticut



came was about as unlike East Anglia as possible. It was bounded, all along its western edge, by hills rising in the White Mountains to very respectable heights indeed. Even on the coast there were hills and promontories. Boston's Beacon Hill is very unlike Market Hill in Cambridge (Eng.). The two great rocks that bound New Haven (the home of Yale University) are much more dramatic than the Gogs. But it was not only by its hills that New England was new. It had been scoured, denuded by glaciation, and the result was fields strown with great rocks, a generally thin soil, fast rivers with rapids and falls and only occasional islands of fertile soil. By an historical oddity, the Pilgrim Fathers landed on a stretch of the coast that far from being "stern and rockbound", as Mrs Hemans imagined, was almost pure sand. Plymouth Rock, now enshrined in a kind of wedding-cake monument, wouldn't be taken seriously as a rock further north in Massachusetts!

"Rocks and rills", as the song puts it, and trees—for most of New England was heavily wooded. The patches of fertile soil became the centres of settlement; round the "green" were the houses of the community, for the New England village was in its origin semi-communal. There were the necessities of life, the meeting house, the school, the blacksmith's forge. The "meeting house", for it was not only a place for religious exercises, but for the political life of the community, of the "town meeting" (a New England "town" need not be urban at all; it may be a collection of hamlets covering a considerable area of farm-land). The New England meeting house was, indeed, a combination of a church and a kind of capitol for the little republic. Religious and civic pride lie behind these elegant buildings.

Inevitably, the settlers built in wood. They were used to wooden houses at home and there are still standing wooden houses of a type that can be paralleled in East Anglia. The local stone was too difficult to work (the great marble and granite quarries of Vermont were not worked till the last century); clay for brickmaking was scarce while wood was abundant. But it was soon found that the rigorous winter climate made a mere imitation of English building methods inadvisable. Thatch, for instance, was not suitable and was replaced by shingles. Clapboard replaced half-timbered houses. And as wealth increased, many beautiful town and village houses were built by people of wealth and good taste who, in old England, would

have built in brick or stone. There were and are fine old brick houses in New England, but the characteristic New England achievement in domestic architecture is the white-painted wooden house shaded by magnificent trees looking over the common or green, or over the harbour.

For more than any of the other colonies, the New England settlements took to the sea. They had to. Their soil was thin, but the sea around them was rich. There were the local fishing grounds; there were the Grand Banks of Newfoundland; there were the long voyages to Africa for slaves, bought with molasses bought in the West Indies with fish. No wonder that the emblem of Massachusetts is "the Sacred Cod" and that a wooden model of the wealth-bringing fish hangs in Boston State House! Then there came the great days of the whalers when the pursuers of "Moby Dick" might be away from home for three years at a time. From these voyages came wealth for all the ports from Eastport on the borders of Nova Scotia to Long Island Sound close to New York. The prosperous captains put their profits from voyages to Canton or Tahiti into fine houses and on the roofs there were the enclosed platforms, the "widows' walks", where anxious wives were supposed to pace, watching the harbour for the long-absent ships. Some of the most beautiful New England streets and houses are in the ports, most of them now cut off from all world commerce, doing a little fishing and more pleasure-yachting. Salem, New Bedford, Nantucket will never know the same great romantic days again, but their architectural achievements live after them.

But although New England soil was barren, it was cultivated all the same. And the climate imposed its terms on the settlers. Even in southern Connecticut the winter is severe by English standards and, in Vermont and New Hampshire, away from the sea, it can be very severe. So houses had to be better heated, more free from draughts, barns had to be bigger and better. If possible, there was a covered way from the dwelling quarters to the quarters for the cattle and horses. But if winter was severe, it was bracing and beautiful. Snow brought out the austere beauty of the landscape and you might see the wonder that Mark Twain so much admired, the "ice storm" where after a sudden drop in temperature the trees are covered with thousands of glittering crystals. Winter was the time for sleigh rides and now it is the time for winter sports, for, almost



unknown twenty-five years ago, skiing is a great tourist industry in New England and there are Americans for whom Dartmouth College is as well known for its Ice Carnival as for its academic importance. There are other winter sports or occasions for winter jollity, like the collection of the syrup from the maples that will be made into maple sugar; but from a scenic point of view autumn, "the Fall", is the great New England glory.

The New England soil, which has not been generous in other ways, has been generous in providing the conditions that make the autumn colouring of the trees inconceivably beautiful. No-one who has not seen a New England Fall can imagine what glories the "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness" can provide, in a climate not given much to either mist or fruitfulness. The hot summer, the brief spring have their charms, too, especially if you are a holidaymaker in the White Mountains or on the seaboard. These pleasures can be rivalled elsewhere, but the Fall is nonpareil.

New England is now a great industrial area, but one old industry flourishes as much as ever, in great industrial centres like Cambridge (Mass.) and New Haven (Conn.), and in villages like Amherst and Hanover. For the Massachusetts Bay Colony was only a few years old when it founded Harvard College and sponsored the Boston Latin School. And New England has been a centre of education ever since. There are Harvard and Yale, Dartmouth, Amherst, Williams. There are the pioneer colleges for women, Mount Holyoke, Wellesley, Smith. There are the "prep" schools, equivalents of our "public" schools: old endowed academies like Exeter and Andover and Deerfield as well as more deliberate imitations of English models like St Paul's and Groton. There are famous schools for girls like The Winsor

School in Boston. There are new experimental colleges like Bennington in Vermont. Since the founders of the Bay Colony took steps to secure the continuance of a "learned ministry", the torch of learning has never been allowed to fall from New England hands. And other cultural activities are pursued with New England energy and tenacity. The great Boston Symphony Orchestra has a child in the summer music festival at Tanglewood, in the Berkshire Hills. All along the coast, summer theatres give an opportunity for new talent to show itself and old talent to escape from Broadway or Hollywood. New England is one of the most painted areas of America as it well deserves to be. It is a national playground but it is much more than that. It is a source of wealth and leadership for the whole of the United States.

And it has kept its character, despite its industrialization, the flood of immigration, the decline of its old seafaring life. And this is the more striking that it is a very varied region. Maine is in New England and there bears and moose tempt the hunter and there are thousands of square miles that can only be approached by canoes. There Indians still lead a semi-nomadic life and the great "forest primeval" recalls the earliest days of settlement. At the other end are the Connecticut towns like Rye and Westport that are, in effect, New York suburbs. But both are marked by New England characteristics. A native of Eastport, Maine, settled in Southport, Connecticut, is still more at home than in New York or Pennsylvania. The mark put on this region not so much by the mild Pilgrim Fathers as by the more dominating types who settled round Massachusetts Bay is still there. They imposed conformity and bred dissent. And one can say of all New England what was once said of Boston: "It is not a place, it is a state of mind".

*The eight pictures of New England reproduced  
in photogravure were taken by  
Samuel Chamberlain, of Marblehead, Mass.*



# The Mackenzie Basin

by JESSIE W. WATSON

*Mrs Watson supplies an airborne geographer's view, at once broad and penetrating, of the immense territory traversed by the Mackenzie river system. She is Lecturer in Geography at Carleton College, Ottawa; and her husband, who accompanied her on the journey which this article describes, is Director of the Geographical Branch of the Canadian Department of Mines and Technical Surveys*

DURING the last few years developments in Canada have focused new attention on its pioneer regions. Not the least of these is the Mackenzie basin. The opening-up of additional agricultural districts in its upper parts, the discovery of an economic way to use its tar sands, the extension of commercial fishing in its great lakes and the expansion of mining along its eastern rim, are all signs of promise. They have prompted the title "The New Northwest" for this region that was for so long the domain of the trapper and hunter.

To get there we flew—as do most travellers—from Edmonton, the "gateway to the North", over the prairie checkerboard of large square fields, green with wheat or brown with summer fallow. Here and there we saw an oil derrick with gleaming tanks set about it. Roads run straight north and south and never vary for mile upon mile, except where they cross a river deeply entrenched between its banks.

Very soon the farm-land appeared only in little dots, punctuating the vast green forest. Then, passing over a low plateau studded with lakes and muskeg swamps, we came down in view of the Mackenzie basin where the waters of the Clearwater join those of the Athabaska.

Few sights could provide a greater thrill. There was the great river, one of the largest in the world, swinging its way freely across the plains in its patient duty of orienting Canadian life and thought towards the North. Familiar though great spaces and boundless horizons are in Canada, the immensity of this northern basin is none the less impressive. From the air it can be seen to stretch in river, forest and muskeg for countless miles. Perhaps, above everything else, it is the loneliness of these miles, the emptiness of the scene, that are most striking. In this great plain are no farms or factories, no bridges, railways or large cities. Civilization just barely reaches it in the terminal of Waterways or the airstrip at Fort McMurray.

Proceeding north, we gradually became aware of its characteristics. The plain is

traversed by rivers which are deeply entrenched, with terraces and high banks on either side. The banks break steeply and their sharp edges are often so deeply eroded that no tree can grow there. Consequently they can be seen for miles from the air, looking like pale yellow or greyish scars on the surface of the landscape.

The enormous amount of earth eroded from these scalloped banks makes the river quite muddy. During the dry season in each year this huge load of material is rather hastily dumped wherever the current slackens, and consequently the river is full of shoals. A few of these have gained some permanence where they are covered with forest, but many of them shift about in such a way as to provide severe handicaps to Mackenzie navigation.

As hundreds of miles of this landscape slipped by, we wondered more and more what human use could be made of it all. Only occasional cabins, with a small field or two, break the vast sweep of the forest; and although these indeed testify to the physical possibility of agriculture, yet their very isolation and loneliness bespeak the economic hazard of the enterprise. And the forest, though extensive enough to provide good timber, is broken by the deeply entrenched rivers and by the thousands of ponds and swamps that lie upon the glacially undulating surface.

Possibly the most promising part of this upper region of the Mackenzie basin consists of the belt of country from Fort Vermilion on the middle Peace River to Goldfields on Lake Athabaska. Here you have a region where agriculture is a calculable possibility. Here, too, the fishing grounds of the first of the great Mackenzie lakes have shown themselves to be of considerable value. Mining on the north shore of Lake Athabaska has already earned an established position. Moreover, the forests of the lower Peace are one of the last great stands of sizable timber left in Canada. As settlement moves north, therefore, this region might prove a link between the prairies and the northern territories.





*courtesy of the Royal Canadian Air Force*

*Fort McMurray, a trading centre on the Athabaska River in north-east Alberta. From nearby rail-head the Mackenzie river system affords an almost unbroken 1500-mile waterway to the Arctic Ocean*

One of the most notable features of the Mackenzie basin consists in the tumultuous rapids that froth between Fort Fitzgerald and Fort Smith. These rapids have necessitated the famous Fitzgerald Portage, which is followed by a road that runs for about seventeen miles between the old fort at Fitzgerald to just below Fort Smith at the northern end of the rapids.

Modern engineering has transformed the Portage. The ships dock by quays which can be adjusted to the rise and fall of the river-level. Huge eight-wheeled trailers are backed on the runways that slope down to the ships. Mobile cranes of giant proportions swing the goods from the ships onto the trucks. The bags and crates are safely packed, and carted away in a cloud of dust along the portage highway.

The road winds west of the rocky barrier here thrust across the river, and follows the edge of the sandy delta that widens northward to the Great Slave Lake. Billowing clouds of sand follow each truck and rise so high that they can be seen for miles off. The trucks churn the road into drifts and ruts, making it necessary to smooth it out every day.

The sandy nature of the soil keeps the land well drained and rather dry. Trees do not grow to a large size and the forest is quite thin. It has easily been cleared and there are quite a number of small farms lying between the busy ports and trading-posts. These consist of plots of land in which garden products are raised with perhaps a field of potatoes and grain. Small fruits like raspberries seem to do





*By courtesy of the Geographical Branch, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Canada*

*(Above) Fort Fitzgerald. From here to Fort Smith, seventeen miles to the north, tumultuous rapids prevent navigation of the Slave River and goods are taken by the portage road connecting the two places.*

*(Below) Pelican Rapids, a 150-ton tug, is hauled overland around the rapids for work on the lower river*

*National Film Board of Canada, by courtesy of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys*





very well. Each farm has a lot of poultry, but little other livestock. The farmers have a busy life in the summer trying to supply vegetables, eggs, milk and butter to the greatly enlarged populations of the local settlements. In the winter the occupants take to trapping. The buildings on these farms are few and of the simplest, most of them consisting of one-storeyed huts with low sloping roofs of sod or turf with a plastering of mud between the logs. They have few windows. However, sod-covered homes and tractors side by side are not uncommon.

At the lower end of the Portage, beneath the last of the six rapids down which the river plunges, lies Fort Smith. This busy little trading centre and administrative post really possesses elements of beauty. Beneath the rapids and at the foot of the almost cliff-like banks of the Slave River lies the port. A steep road rises from the quay to make its way through a deep-walled canyon cut into the lofty banks of the river to the flat plain above. Here the heights are crowned by a hotel and trading-post owned by the Hudson's Bay Company, this group of buildings consisting of white frame houses with steeply pitched red roofs.

A little to the south-west is the administrative area of the settlement, consisting of Headquarters of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, together with Federal Government buildings, including a row of homes of pleasant architecture occupied by government officials. These back onto the truly striking school recently built to provide public education for the growing populace. Beyond the end of this row is the Catholic Mission station dominated by the Bishop's Palace. Finally beyond the cluster of mission buildings is the straggling village of Indian homes composed of clapboard houses, cabins and tents. A Weather Station and Signal Headquarters make up the rest of the town.

The difficulties created by the Portage made it necessary to find some other way of taking goods into the North. This other way has been to connect the busy Peace River District with Hay River on Great Slave Lake by the Mackenzie Highway. The highway leaves the little town of Grimshaw at the head of the railway at almost the same latitude as Waterways, the rival terminal in the east. From Grimshaw the road proceeds north through some farming country and then across trackless wilderness to the little port of Hay River on the Great Slave Lake.

This was a small Indian fishing settlement until only a few years ago. Many Indians still

live there in their tents and log cabins and fish the lake for trout and whitefish during the summer. In the winter they take their dogs and go into the bush on trapping expeditions. This primitive way of life has received a rude jolt as modern transportation exploded into it. A major highway has brought eight-wheeled trailers and refrigerator trucks down to a series of warehouses, offices and fish-packing stations that have now made Hay River a quite considerable trading centre.

The town is composed really of two settlements, one at the head of the road, beside the river itself, and the other at the edge of the lake. The inner settlement is quite a modern place with restaurants, service stations, general stores, truck-barns, warehouses, bunk-houses for the truckers, government offices, churches, and a school. Just as busy as Fort Smith in the summer, Hay River maintains a busier air through the winter. For, unlike Fort Smith, it is not dependent on the vagaries of the Mackenzie river system. In the summer it has no fear of low water to interrupt traffic, for goods come by road to the edge of the Great Slave Lake. In winter the goods still keep arriving and are thence carried off to Yellowknife by way of a winter road across the western arm of Great Slave Lake. This continuous flow of business helps to offset the somewhat higher cost of transportation caused by a predominantly land route.

The fishing settlement, which is on the edge of the lake, is still very ragged because, as yet, few fishermen live there permanently. The Indians and half-breeds who fish there in the summer, trap in the neighbouring forests in the winter. Most of the fishermen are migrant Icelanders who move north from the Prairies for the fishing season. Their annual catch, however, is considerable, amounting to over 70,000 hundredweight of fish. Most of this is transported to Edmonton and Chicago markets.

Along the north shore of Great Slave Lake mining is active. Here the land is altogether different from that south to Edmonton. In days of flying over the flat and nearly featureless plain of the Athabaska and Slave Rivers, over vast glacial deltas and across the long glacial-lake terraces and steep river banks, we had almost become accustomed to think of the North in terms of sweeping horizons of plain and forest, of meandering river and marshy lakes. Crossing to Yellowknife, we entered a different world: a world of grey, hard rock, stripped and gouged by ice; a world of erosive, not depositional features, of



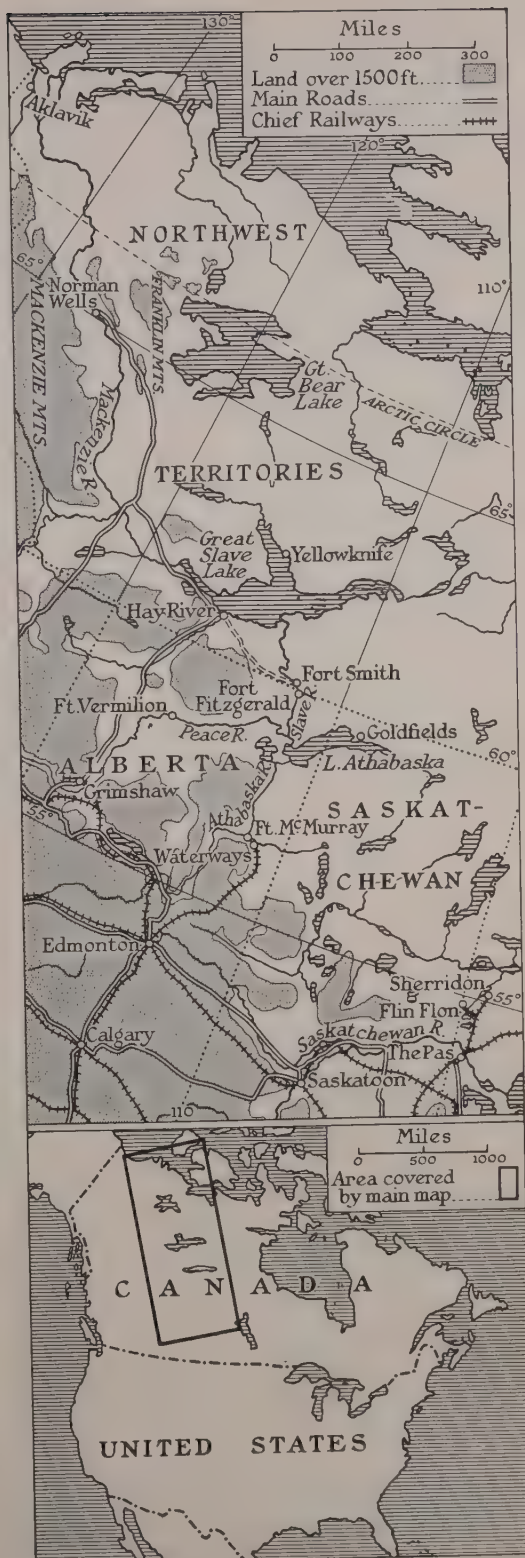
scant soil and thin bush, of rivers leaping down cataracts and cold, deep lakes scooped out of the rock.

Life seems almost out of place in this dead grey, dead bare landscape. Nevertheless, the aeroplane touches down at a thriving town as ambitious as any to be found in Northern Ontario or the Prairies. That is what mining has done for the North. It has brought town life into close, even violent juxtaposition with the wilderness. It has lifted smoke-stacks above trackless wastes, blasted streets across rocky ridges, pumped sewage into glacial lakes and humanized the muskeg with playground and school.

There is an air of hope and optimism about this place. With faith in the future, the town-site was laid out many times larger than has proved necessary. A fine modern hospital, a first-rate high school, built in the most modern style, a theatre which could hold half of the population, one or two stores which would do credit to many a southern town, and a most up-to-date hotel, all speak of the vision and enterprise of the people.

The attractive force which has worked this transformation is, of course, the old lure of gold; and indeed you soon see why only such a force could have the power to change the environment. Great overhead expenses and the enormous difficulties involved in mining in the North have so far been met by mining only the high-priced metals. In the Northwest Territories these metals are gold and uranium. Considerable deposits of lead and zinc, copper and silver are known to exist but it has not been worth while, so far, to undertake the labours of their extraction.

These labours are very considerable indeed. They include the tasks already outlined in getting goods into the mine; tasks which include disciplining a variable and shifting river interrupted by rapids and driving a road through hundreds of miles of unoccupied forest and muskeg. At the mines themselves there is the difficulty of blasting shafts down several hundreds, even thousands, of feet through extremely hard rock. As the rock is broken by many faults, the ore bodies are frequently displaced. This increases the cost and difficulty of mining. The huge cracks in the rocks have let down the surface-water into the depths of the mines and many of these are so wet that strenuous pumping is required to clear the water from the underground galleries. Other sub-surface conditions are hard on the northern miner. In winter time, intensely cold air gets down to the lowest workings. Consequently it is



A. J. Thornton





National Film Board of Canada, by courtesy of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys

(Above) The arrival of the first summer barge at Yellowknife heralds the opening of the four-month shipping season when heavy goods, such as oil from Norman Wells to replenish storage tanks, can be moved by water.

(Below) Difficulties of mining and building in the rock and frozen soil are outweighed by the lure of gold

National Film Board of Canada, by courtesy of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys







*National Film Board of Canada, by courtesy of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys*

*In Yellowknife's rocky environment there are hollows where enough soil has collected for crops to be raised, and market-gardens have helped to lower the high cost of importing fresh vegetables*

necessary to pump a stream of warm air throughout the mine.

Conditions on the land above are also difficult. Beneath the first few inches of the soil, which thaw out each summer and are therefore called the active layer, is the permafrost layer, consisting of permanently frozen ground. When the first buildings were raised, problems of "permafrost" were not understood. There was considerable heaving, and the buildings began to sag or to buckle apart. This problem has been overcome only at great expense. At one mine the heavier buildings had to be erected on a platform levelled from the rugged outcrops of rock. As the mine grew, some of the buildings expanded onto clays affected by the heaving and congealing of the frost. Here great piles were driven down to below the level of the active permafrost, after injecting steam through the solidly frozen clay. The piles were then greased and wrapped in tar-paper and slipped into the holes. The result of this is that the freezing and thawing action of the frost does not affect the pile itself, but simply raises or lowers the tar-paper wrapping

around the greased pole.

Another problem is the carrying of water or waste from building to building or from the mines down to the lakes. As the land is so rocky or the soil so frozen, the pipes have to be laid on the surface, but, of course, they become subject to the intense cold of winter. Therefore they are grouped together and boxed-in along their whole length. Usually a steam-pipe runs in the centre of the other pipes and the whole group is heavily packed around with moss or other insulating material, then boxed-in with wood and covered with tar-paper.

Living costs, in general, are high. Food, clothing and recreation are all very expensive. Unlike the mining communities further south, there are virtually no farms in the neighbourhood to provide milk, butter, eggs, green vegetables and potatoes. A few gardens have appeared and their products have somewhat lowered the price which once had to be paid for fresh vegetables. Nevertheless, people face high costs and, as a result, demand high wages. The companies feel obliged to do a lot for their men in order to attract them into and





*By courtesy of the Royal Canadian Air Force*

*(Above) Looking south over Aklavik, a few miles from where the Mackenzie River joins the Arctic Ocean. Eskimo schooners and traders' boats are drawn up at small quays; Indian canoes are littered about the shore. (Below, left) Anglican and (below, right) Roman Catholic mission stations provide schools and hospitals*



*By courtesy of the Geographical Branch, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Canada*



keep them in the North. The larger mines have health, welfare and social programmes which include the provision of much free entertainment. The necessity of these measures rather bears out Stefansson's claim that economic and, above all, sociological factors are the principal ones in peopling the North. That is to say, the physical hazards can be overcome and life can be made relatively tolerable and even pleasant, provided that the social conditions are satisfactory.

North of the Franklin-Mackenzie Mountains, in the Lower Mackenzie basin, conditions for settlement begin to deteriorate. Either there are no valuable minerals to attract people or else the resources are simply too remote for successful development. It is, therefore, into a different order that one goes in proceeding north to Aklavik and the outposts of the Arctic Ocean. Here is the zone of difficulty, of privation in all its bleakness. Here is the zone of constant struggle, endless nomadism and frequent want. Coming upon the Mackenzie delta we were appalled by the sheer desolation of the scene. It might be the very fag-end of the world.

The lowland on either side of the river is black and sombre, with the woods worn thin and the mud showing through. The ground is everywhere cut by minor channels or disappears under ponds. It is an in-between sort of country where the land and the water seem to be in a state of mutual osmosis. There is no rhyme or reason to the landscape. The ponds and lakes appear like phantasies, and the rivers wander in hopeless confusion, leading nowhere and making no pattern. One feels as though distance and perspective, proportion and balance were engulfed in a complete and abandoned waste; as though the world were letting itself sink into oblivion if not degradation.

But even here, man has met the challenge of the North, for in the midst of the waste lies Aklavik, a surprisingly modern little town for all its rawness and squalor. The mission buildings of the Anglican and Catholic missions front the stream with, behind them, a scattering of Indian huts and Eskimo homes leading across a point to a few hotels and trading-posts and to the substantial administrative buildings recently put up by the government.

So great has been the assault on the last frontier of the North that it has really changed the habits and thoughts of the natives. Although they continue their nomadic life, trapping muskrats in one season in the nearby banks, going out to sea to fish in another season, they work in very different ways and

have different objects in view from former times. The Indian of the delta, moving from his home to the musk-rat swamps and back again, would much less dream of paddling his canoe than would the tourist on holiday in other parts of Canada. It could not be said he has forgotten the art of paddling; if forced to that extremity he would, no doubt, propel the canoe himself. But normally he prefers to use the cheap petrol which comes downstream from Norman Wells and to go about his business with the aid of an outboard motor.

As an instance of this change in mentality, I may mention the great reindeer experiment. Years ago, when the reindeer were driven into the Mackenzie delta by Laplanders specially brought over from Europe, it was hoped that the Eskimos would take to reindeer-herding. But if the Laplanders thought that they could teach the Eskimos to make the reindeer the be-all and end-all of Eskimo life, they were mistaken. The Eskimos did not take to milking reindeer, eating their flesh, making tents out of their skins and whittling needles and other implements out of their bones. Consequently reindeer-herding did not become a success until the Eskimos found it feasible to raise reindeer for meat and to sell that meat to supply the growing populations of white settlements in the North. But once reindeer-herding was based on this economic footing, once it could be turned into cash, then the Eskimos began to think better of it; because with the cash they were able to buy things that made them one with the cash economy and way of life of their continent.

In fact, what impressed us most about the North is the way in which it challenges each and all alike to new kinds of living and thinking. This, more than anything else, may be its chief significance. In order to master its problems, men will have to advance in engineering science, in the understanding of climate, in the knowledge of plant and animal life and of their economic use. The challenge to individual courage, determination and enterprise will maintain a love of personal freedom and endeavour. At the same time the compelling need to show a common human front against the inhuman forces of the environment will increase the social bonds between individuals. This should awaken an ever-growing insight into social planning and collective action; and if the advance into the North does produce such results, then it ought to make a significant contribution to our knowledge of how to preserve a nice balance between individual liberty and social responsibility.





From the author

# A Party at The Pas

by C. R. STANTON

*The Pas lies some 350 miles north of the United States border: inhabited Canada stretches four times as far north as that (see map on page 487). Here is a scene from its winter life. (Left) A local monument to the hardihood of a pioneer, 260 years ago*

Company, a man by the name of Henry Kelsey made an epic journey from Hudson Bay into the interior. Kelsey was instructed by the Hudson's Bay Company Governor "to call, encourage and invite the remoter Indians to trade with us . . ." Kelsey did just that. He moved south and west, passing through tribes of warring Indians, crossing a land of lakes and plains, looking upon herds of buffalo, moose, caribou and the fierce grizzly bear. The

IN February 1951 Manitoba's northland celebrated its fourth annual winter festival. The people of the lands north of the 53rd parallel flocked in their hundreds to the little town of The Pas located on the banks of the mighty Saskatchewan River not far from where it is joined by the Carrot River. For months ahead the town's two hotels were booked out. A few lucky folk from the cities and towns in the south managed to get rooms but by far the largest part of the throng were Manitobans in from the blizzardily cold north country for a week-long round of sport and gaiety.

The Pas has long been a meeting-place and a cross-roads for the North. It has seen the history of Western Canada in the making and it looks forward to the future development of the great expanse of land to the north. Shortly after the time when King Charles II granted a charter to a body illustriously called "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson Bay" and later to become the Hudson's Bay

intrepid adventurer passed the present site of The Pas and followed the course of the Carrot River until his eyes took in the vista of a great, rolling, grass-covered country. Thus it was that Henry Kelsey became the first white man to look upon the Saskatchewan prairies. His Indian name of Miss-Top-Ashish or "Little Giant", given him for his slaying of two grizzly bears that attacked him and his Indian companion, will give some idea of his indomitable courage. This, coupled with the fact that his reports to the Governor were invariably in verse, are interesting sidelights on one of history's great little men.

In 1731, some forty years after Kelsey passed by The Pas, a Frenchman by the name of Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Vérendrye, was instrumental in the building of a fort at The Pas as a direct challenge to the Company of Adventurers. As the town grew it watched the bitter feud that sprang up between the British and the French over the fabulously rich fur trade. The Pas was at the geographic cross-roads of the conflicting





From the aut

(Above) Winter at The Pas in northern Manitoba, scene of the 1951 Trappers' Festival. Beyond the town a bridge over the frozen Saskatchewan River carries the railway to Flin Flon, seventy miles northwards.

(Below) Joe Highway, son of an Indian chief, winning the 140-mile Dog-Race behind his team of Huskies

Murray L. McKen





interests.

In more recent times the town has been the base for mining prospectors. It has seen the mushroom growth of the romantically named mining town of Flin Flon some seventy miles to the north. From The Pas the railway steel reaches out 500 miles to the north-east across rock and muskeg, lakes and rivers to the port of Churchill on Hudson Bay. To the south and west it connects with the cities of Regina and Saskatoon in the heart of the wheat-growing prairies. This line delivers grain to the holds of the ships which ply the waters of Hudson Bay in the short ice-free season.

In the winter time The Pas becomes the rendezvous of big-game hunters from all over Canada as well as many parts of the United States. Moose, elk, deer and caribou may be taken just an easy trip from the outskirts of the town. In the summer time the deep, cool lakes attract fishermen to do battle with giant lake trout. The rivers abound with trout,

pike, pickerel, gold-eye and other game fish. In the vestibules of its hotels one rubs shoulders with trappers, Indian guides, aeroplane salesmen, white-whalers from Hudson Bay, miners from Flin Flon, farmers, lumbermen, "cat-skinners" (caterpillar-tractor operators), and businessmen from southern cities. These people go to make up part of the colourful pageant of the North and lend an air of authenticity to The Pas' two nicknames of "The Lobby of the North" and "The Key to Up and Down".

The festivities were well under way when we drove into town. The sun was down and the streets were blocked with youthful marchers bearing aloft flaming torches which lit up the faces of the spectators with their flickering, garish light. Singing and shouting the procession wound its way through the streets to the Ice Palace where the Fur Queen of the North was due to be crowned the following day.

Amidst a crowd wearing parkas and fur hats we edged our way into a café for supper. As the *pièce de résistance* the management was offering a dish called "beluga steak". This turned out to be the meat of the white whale brought down from Hudson Bay. To be in keeping with the place and the time we each ordered a steak. The taste could best be described as similar to an ordinary steak fried in cod-liver oil.

One of our party was a young engineer just three months out from Holland and since he was keen to see something of the Indian folk we left the café and headed for the Indians' old-time dance. With their traditional good spirits the Indians, Crees for the most part, engaged in square dancing, waltzing and jigging. The dance-floor was packed solidly with people and despite the fact that it was well-nigh impossible to dance everybody seemed to be having the time of his life. A photographer from a United States weekly magazine as well as others from the National Film

*"Crowned with a white fur tiara and presented with a beautiful fur coat made from northern musk-rat pelts": Miss Sherridon, "Fur Queen of the North", making friends with a young Eskimo from above the 60th parallel*

Murray L. McKenzie





*Three of those who took part in the Trappers' Festival at The Pas : from left to right, 'Caribou' Bill Anger, a well-known trapper ; Chief Cornelius Bignell, the representative of the Indians ; and Herman Primachuck, a Ukrainian, who is wearing Cree dress*

Board of Canada used up many feet of film on this lively scene.

Morning saw the whole population agog with excitement, for this was the day of the start of the 140-mile Canadian Open Dog-Race. The course was north to Cranberry Portage and return on the following day. The previous evening a family of Eskimos had arrived in The Pas from Padlei in the Northwest Territories. Since the dog-race was not scheduled to start until 10.30 in the morning a big crowd gathered to watch the Eskimo folk build themselves an igloo on the banks of the river. It transpired that igloo-building, like modern house-building, requires special materials. In this case the snow blocks were brought down from Churchill as being of superior building quality to those made from the snow in the regions further south. With a skill born of long practice the Eskimos set about assembling their snow home. The blocks were speedily shaped and the flashing snow-knives eased them into place to sit tightly, excluding the wind and locking each other in place. The work was all over before 10.30 and the Eskimos along with the rest of the crowd moved down to the broad ice of the Saskatchewan River to watch the start of the great race.

While cameras ground and clicked seventeen teams of the North's toughest Huskies leaped at the crack of the starter's gun. The battle was on! The familiar and somehow thrilling cry of "mush!" mingled with the barking of the dogs and echoed and re-echoed on the frosty air. Indians and Pale-faces alike rode the racing sledges. The teams soon became specks on the icy waste and finally vanished into the blue-white distance. Overhead roared a ski-equipped plane: the aerial referee of the race.



*Murray L. McKenzie*

After the race had started a wondering Eskimo family was taken on a sight-seeing tour of the town. Since the temperature had risen to almost 'thirty above' by this time, the Eskimos were beginning to find the going a little tough in their heavy skins and furs. To remedy this a visit was paid to the corner store where ice-cream cones were provided for all members. "Too-Too" the man, his wife "Pungwashaloo" and their three-year-old son "Quasha" were taken out to one of the nearby farms to see the livestock. The cows and pigs proved of great interest to these northern-born folk whose knowledge of animals is restricted to moose, caribou and deer. With little Quasha to keep her company Pungwashaloo later paid a visit to the local milliner and through her interpreter she made known to a nonplussed clerk her desire for a new hat "to wear at Padlei at Easter time. . ." Little Quasha seemed to take all this feminine fussing very philosophically.

In the afternoon the Ice Palace became the





From the author

*"In the winter time The Pas becomes the rendezvous of big-game hunters from all over Canada as well as the United States". A load of moose, on its way south to the U.S.A., pauses in the town*

scene of bustling activity. Very soon four pretty young women filed onto the platform and took their places on seats draped with polar-bear pelts. Amid thunderous applause they were introduced as Miss Flin Flon, Miss The Pas, Miss Churchill and Miss Sherridon. Miss Sherridon was declared the winner and as such she assumed the title of "Fur Queen of the North". She was crowned with a white fur tiara and presented with a beautiful fur coat made from northern musk-rat pelts. Her attendant princesses were each presented with brightly coloured parkas.

Perhaps one of the most attractive features of the Festival was the manner in which the events followed quickly upon each other. Of course the cold climate has something to do with that. A crowd that is slowly but surely having its feet frozen requires something to keep it on the move and hold its interest all the time.

Down in the sports park a loud-speaker proclaimed that free tea would be put on in a very short time. This turned out to be very close to malicious propaganda for it was nothing more nor less than an advertisement for the "make-your-tea-from-the-can-of-snow-

race". A number of people armed with cans of snow were required to run a snappy hundred yards through ankle-deep snow, build a fire from twigs and sticks (provided by the management) and over this fire by devious means to reduce the snow to boiling water. This proved most diverting. Presumably cheating wasn't in the book but it was none the less interesting to watch the pilfering from sundry well-established fires while their owners were away looking for more wood. For those who like their tea made from boiling water and allow it to draw for a minute or so, this method of preparation could in no way be recommended.

After the judge had performed his unenviable duty of tea-sampling the proceedings moved on to take in a series of snow-shoe races. This provided the northern folk with an opportunity of showing their skill in an art peculiarly their own. Ladies and men each had an event and then to round things off a mixed three-legged race was held: it left the spectators from the south in some doubt as to the ability of northern couples to get along in harness!

Perhaps even more in keeping with this





*All Kodachromes by the author*

(Above) After various competitions, the main cross-roads of The Pas were given up to street dancing, in which visitors from many walks of life in the Canadian North—lumbermen, trappers, whalers—took part.  
 (Below) An Eskimo family, who in their fur parkas found The Pas warm by comparison with their own country







*An Indian couple jigging in the centre of a gay circle. Behind may be seen the "enclosure with a display of northern animals", including that mysterious migrant, the anagrammatical "Lausunu"*

northern setting was the musk-rat skinning contest. To the men who make their living at trapping the greatest obstacle in this competition was to cover the hundred-yard dash in time to be assured of having a rat to skin. From then on, from the spectators' point of view, the whole thing appeared to be as quick and simple as peeling a banana.

A northern carnival would never be complete without a fishing race, so it came as no surprise when a party of husky fellows were seen racing onto the ice of the Saskatchewan River armed with axes and fishing lines. To the shouted encouragement of a delighted crowd the axes were swung aloft and the ice chips flew at random. The period of patient waiting for a bite came rather as an anti-climax after all the furious activity that marked the start of the contest. The ladies also had their turn at this but the rules decreed that they might use the holes already cut by the menfolk.

Another contest, uniquely fishy, was only for those with insensitive taste-buds and strong stomachs. This was a "sucker"-eat-

ing competition. The sucker is a scavenger-fish and is definitely not to be regarded as good eating. Had there been a cup for being good sports I'm sure that it would have been awarded to this hardy band of fish-eaters.

The third day of the festival saw the finish of the big dog-race. If the start had been an exciting spectacle the finish was even more so. Aloft, an aircraft kept the waiting crowd informed by radio of the progress of the first three teams until they finally came into view. The winner was Joe Highway, son of an Indian chief, a trapper from Lac du Brochet, who completed the 140-mile round trip in 16 hours, 49 minutes and 50 seconds. As his flagging Huskies pulled to a halt between the winning-posts Joe was received into the arms of a wildly cheering crowd. First to greet him was the beautiful young Fur Queen who planted a smacking kiss on his leathery cheek. Embarrassed Joe submitted to a battery of cameras. The Fur Queen and her attendants then draped a wreath of flowers around the neck of his lead dog, who seemed much less disturbed by all the fuss than did his master.



In covering the gruelling course a full ten minutes before his nearest rival Joe Highway became the hero of the 1951 Trappers' Festival and the proud recipient of the Hudson's Bay Mining and Smelting Company's Trophy, to say nothing of a \$1000 cheque.

Once the competitions were over the programme was taken up with street dancing. The main cross-roads in town were taken over as a dancing-floor. Fiddles and guitars appeared and a jolly old-timer in fur coat and green cap mounted the platform to call the measure for the square dancing. Everyone had on his or her finest parka, many of which displayed intricate Indian bead designs. Not a few wore moccasins or "mukluks", the calf-high skin boots of the far north. Checked shirts, Daniel Boone hats and fox-pelt hats were common. The spontaneous gaiety of the square dances lent an air of gala festivity to the proceedings. From square dancing the tempo quickened to accommodate the Indian exponents of jigging. It was amazing to see the ability which even the heavier Indian women displayed in this remarkable form of dancing. We never discovered whether the end of each performance was brought about

through exhaustion on the part of the musicians or the dancers. The children were not outdone in this event either. One little fellow, perhaps three years old and dressed in a red-and-black checked suit with a yellow muffler, stretched to the limit of his harness to get into the circle and proceeded to give his version of a jig. The fiddle slowed down for him and quite oblivious of the crowd he carried on until his smiling mother decided that he had claimed the limelight long enough.

Right across the corner from the dancers was a small enclosure with a display of northern animals which proved a great attraction for the folk from the south. Wolves, coyotes, mink, beaver, foxes and caribou were a few of the exhibits but by far the greatest feature of interest was a nightmare creature mysteriously labelled "The Lausunu". It had four feet, very much like those of a cow, the body of a wolf, two furry tails, the head of a polar bear, the horns of a caribou and sprouting from its back was a large pair of bird's wings of unknown origin. In certain circles this fantastic creature must have acted as a strong deterrent to further partaking of the flowing bowl. Be that as it may, shortly before the

*Fiddles and guitars provided music for the dancers; headgear showed a highly individual variety*







*A "cat-skinner" (caterpillar-tractor operator) looks down over his protective canvas screen. He runs his machine across frozen lakes and rivers, bringing supplies to trappers in the far north*

Festival closed the people of The Pas awoke one morning to find that the Lausunu had disappeared as completely and mysteriously as the Stone of Scone from Westminster Abbey. Several days later it was found sitting patiently on the steps of the Town Hall in Flin Flon. It seemed that in its flight to the north the Lausunu had been supported in some measure by the Flin Flon Chamber of Commerce which thought that this "unusual" animal would be an added attraction at the opening of the Flin Flon "bonspiel".

One evening of the celebrations was taken up with competitions held in the local skating rink. Perhaps greatest interest was shown in the wild-goose calling contest. The four finalists would surely have lured the most suspicious goose to its doom. As a grand finale the Master of Ceremonies brought them all together to give a most realistic imitation of a flock passing overhead. A liars' contest which produced some fabulous stories even for the fabulous north proved most entertaining as did the fiddlers' contest. No mention

of this evening would be complete, however, without reference to a man who has perhaps done more than any other to integrate and promote the north country. To the people of Northern Manitoba Tom Lamb is a symbol of progress. His airline reaches out across the northland to faraway traplines and he is the firm friend of Indian and Paleface alike. The Cree flows from his tongue as readily as his native English. Typical of his efforts to promote goodwill was his sponsoring of a Cree-speaking competition for Palefaces.

With a final grand banquet and farewell dance the 1951 Trappers' Festival drew to a close. From their brief hour of fun the hardy men of the North turned back to their traplines. The giant tractors roared and once more the long tractor trains, or "catswings", took up their runs through hoar-coated forest, across the ice and tundra, hauling out supplies and bringing back pelts. The fancy parkas and mukluks were replaced with the old serviceable buckskins and fur boots and the North resumed its work for another season.

# The United States

## II. "E Pluribus Unum"

by GERALD H. HONES

*A Rotary Fellowship enabled Mr Hones to visit the United States and pursue geographical field studies there. His travels afforded him the experience recorded in this and a previous article, in which he has sought a less superficial answer than is commonly given by Europeans to the question: What are the chief factors conducing to diversity and what to unity in American life?*

"AMERICAN citizen"—the stream of people crossing the bridge over the Rio Grande so identified themselves to the U.S. Immigration Officers. I had myself been wandering around Ciudad Juarez for a few hours, trying out my rusty Spanish, and had stopped at the Immigration Control Point watching the crowd entering the United States. The officials seemed able to pick out unerringly the Mexicans attempting an illegal entry. One sloe-eyed little girl, not having the requisite visa permit card, decided to make a dash for it but, foiled in the attempt and struggling fiercely, let loose a torrent of Mexican comments on the injustice of it all. Most of those being allowed to pass through were American tourists returning to El Paso from sight-seeing in Mexico, but quite a number seemed from appearance to be local inhabitants of Mexican descent. But whether they were from Wyoming or Washington, named Maloney or Mikolowski, was of no consequence, they could all proudly affirm citizenship of the one nation.

In my travels I had found the expected diversity. During the year I had visited the mountains of Vermont where the temperature was 15° below zero and sweltered in the humid 95° of the Gulf Coast; I had experienced the snow-clad grandeur of the Rockies and the unrelieved monotony of the scrub deserts in Arizona. Moreover I had been impressed throughout with the diversity of peoples which had been, and still are being, superimposed on the different physical environments. One glance in a college register or telephone directory was sufficient to hint at the wide variety of backgrounds from which the American people had come.

It became an interesting pastime to note the geographical distribution of this name-variety, even when travelling by car. This was possible in rural and suburban areas by looking at the names painted on the sides of the metal mail-boxes which are so often fixed

at the end of the garden to save the postman the walk to the house. Frequently he can leave the mail simply by leaning out of his car at each mail-box. In urban regions, names over shops were the best guide to the dominant home-country represented and, at times, there were twin-language signs, distinctive denominational churches, or restaurants advertising such dishes as ravioli or smorgaasbord.

Bringing their own particular living customs, pronunciation, folk-dances, literature, music and favourite foods, each group is contributing something different and valuable to the American scene. Differences of tradition, which might at first seem highly incompatible, are gradually being integrated. National enclaves are naturally still quite common, and as long as new groups of immigrants continue to arrive they will always be there, with the newcomers living in the poorest areas, getting the lowest-paid jobs and so on; but gradually, as each successive wave gains in social recognition and seniority, the integrating process gains in momentum. With each generation Americanization becomes more complete, as the old heritages slowly merge into the past.

During the year I saw this process in many of its different stages, and it struck me that it was the new 'second generation' American who was most American of all, particularly when dealing with any more recently arrived, and therefore more junior, group. Is it not the second-year student at the university ('sophomore' in American terminology) who is normally most prominent in ragging the freshman?

Yet, out of all this turmoil, there rises the unity of a new nation. It seemed much more than the superficial uniformity so often stressed by visitors to the U.S.A. Of course, the regional variations remain, and in most instances the physical environment appears to have created these regions indirectly, by





Camera Press

Kodachrome

*To American unity every immigrant group brings something fresh and valuable. (Above) Old heritages coalesce in the pride of a new nation. Swedish-American children at school. (Below) Engagement in common industrial enterprise speeds the mixing process. Workers in a General Motors canteen, Detroit*



Camera Press

Kodachrome



color

Camera Press

The products of American industry, distributed and nationally advertised throughout a vast single free-trade area, create a common standard of living for all Americans, whatever may be their race, creed or colour. (Above) Advertisements seen on Broadway, whether of goods or of Hollywood's food for popular entertainment, repeat themselves in a thousand American cities. (Right) The dinner-fare, clothing and household equipment of a Negro family in New York are indistinguishable from those of millions of other Americans



Kodachrome

Camera Press





amera Press

Kodachron

*Mobility is a most effective unifying force ; and nowhere has air travel developed so extensively as in the United States, annihilating the continent's immense distances. (Above) An outdoor assembly line for Convair passenger machines at San Diego, California*



By courtesy of United States Information Service

*The privately owned automobile dominates American life. Movement on the highways is facilitated by alternating black and white traffic lanes and 'overpasses' with merging exit and entrance roads*

presenting to the settler conditions favourable for certain activities—not dominating the mode of life, but influencing it, and in turn being partially modified as man evolved a society—but, to me, the unity was more powerful. How is it being created? What coalescing forces are at work to overcome the many tendencies to sectionalism?

Although the main American background has been predominantly Protestant, with the growing influence of the Roman Catholic and other churches the old traditions have lost much of their power of unification. But the pioneer outlook, the search for freedom, is still an important national characteristic, giving all the people some common social ideals and hopes for the future. With a constantly affirmed faith in the ability of the individual, the American is creating a new social order aided by this agreement in outlook. I sensed this before ever reaching New York, studying the assorted folk travelling to their new, and generally unseen, country. Aboard the ship they were all, weather permitting, meeting a new way of life—a strange

one of Coca Colas, drinking-fountains, colourful clothes and a variety of new foods. The family groups of 'displaced persons' from Eastern Europe who huddled on the upper deck with rather timid air; the rowdy, ruddy-cheeked Irishmen who sang, danced and played vigorous games of soccer in the D-deck lounge; the tall, slim ex R.N. submarine commander who "just couldn't stick a Socialist Britain": these were among the many who were looking forward confidently to a new life.

To them all, the English or, more precisely, American language soon acts as a powerful agent towards unity. It has been quite inevitable that in creating a common language with such a fluid heterogeneous population, the new American tongue should have incorporated some important variations on its dominant English theme. Nevertheless, this 'English' language of the New World affords an immediate bond of unity for all English-speaking peoples, whatever their accent, grammar or actual vocabulary. It accelerates the mixing process. To those



Americans in embryo who know little or no English, the challenging need to learn and the ultimate success again provides a bond of unity in purpose.

Special instructional classes are available for those adult immigrants in need of them, but it is with the next generation that the process of Americanization becomes most effective, as they enter school. The educational system is a major force hastening unity. The academic side, formal education, is only a part of normal school life which is generally designed to educate on a much broader plane, to teach the young student how best to mature into a worthy American citizen—not a Polish-American, nor Irish-American, but simply an American. American education is playing a social role in order to bring together the children of recent immigrants, mix them with each other and youngsters of old American stock and provide a new common background of experience. From the elementary, or 'grade' school, through the high school to college and university level, the same unification process operates.

Naturally, in a country of such size, education varies in type and efficiency according to the region, particularly as each State is responsible for its own system and jealously resists any hint of federal control, but the general ideas are much the same throughout. A notable exception is in the South where the policies of segregation result in separate schools for black and white, and a most unfair disparity in the state financial backing

provided to the two systems. Normally however no distinctions are drawn—in the classroom, on the baseball 'diamond' or when meeting socially in the drugstore for a 'coke', these youngsters mix freely. Anderson, Vasil, Dik, Shiminski and O'Connor comprised the 'starting line-up' of a varsity basketball team I knew, and among those liable to be called on during the game as substitutes were Greenwald, Kaufman, Taylor and Mikolowski. But I will say more of the effect of sport later.

Schools also have another function in that they carefully inculcate a common political faith. Each morning there is the simple ceremony of saluting the national flag, the Stars and Stripes, which is taken by the whole nation as a symbolic figurehead. There are parallel rituals in adult life—for example, the luncheon meetings of a Rotary Club are invariably prefaced by the national anthem, always sung facing the flag, which is prominently displayed somewhere in the room, often fluttering in an artificial breeze created by electric fans.

In many ways, despite the regional 'pull' that results inevitably from separate State governments, the institutional, political and legal pattern over the country, having spread outward from the original thirteen States, is an important unifying force. The actual Constitution, so rigid that the famed judicial Supreme Court is required to authorize elasticity in its interpretation, is designed to provide the federal power necessary to unity. "We, the people of the United States, in



A. J. Thornton

order to form a *more perfect Union*, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

The two parties, Republican and Democrat, which dominate the political scene seemingly cut haphazardly across the American diversities, and consequently should work towards increased national cohesion. Their influence however seemed much less than might have been expected as the average American appeared to me to be less politically-minded than his European counterpart. This apparent relative indifference may be because he is called upon to vote for too many, too often: for county and municipal officers, judges, the Governor and two legislative houses for the State, the federal Senate and House of Representatives, and finally, the President himself—all theoretically separate elections. In 1948, when Harry S. Truman upset all calculations by beating Dewey for the Presidency, there seemed nothing like the interest that is engendered in Britain by a General Election. But possibly that was because the outcome was deemed such a foregone conclusion! Or perhaps because the voters found it too difficult, as many half-jokingly told me, to differentiate between the declared policies of the opposing parties!

Of all the unifying forces, however, I consider the mobility of the people to be the most effective, for with the persistent mixing of a fluid population, differences of all types can be slowly ironed out. This continual movement is no doubt partially stimulated by an underlying national restlessness, the search for better things, the knowledge that there are always new regions open to present further opportunities. The fact that the distances involved are often immense according to European standards is no deterrent whatsoever. The modern American traveller will motor a few hundred miles each way for a weekend vacation, such as skiing in the mountains, and think nothing of it. I joined a group one weekend, most of whom jour-



By courtesy of United States Information Service

*Self-service markets, with wheeled baskets to be emptied at the cashier's counter, lower the cost of distributing standardized consumer goods throughout the United States*

neyed by car from Connecticut to Vermont on the Friday evening, returning late on Sunday, long skis strapped to car-roofs, a round trip of over 400 miles.

But the more important types of movement are of longer duration. Probably the best-known seasonal migration is the winter exodus, in quite staggering numbers, of wealthy Americans from the north, farmers and city businessmen alike, to sunny Florida and California. More effective however are the more permanent—even if rarely fully so—movements of families setting up new homes elsewhere as the breadwinner changes his occupation or place of work. Statistics show a very marked redistribution of settlement as industry, and the consequent new urban expansion, develops rapidly in the west and south, attracting workers from the older-established industrial regions in the north-east manufacturing belt. In the reverse





International News Photos

*The 'convention' habit is an important integrating factor. American businessmen wearing Shriner fezzes may look silly to European eyes; but the meeting of 75,000 Shriners from all over the country at their annual convention is of real social value*

electric engine's whistle; but the former still announce their approach by a low-pitched resonant note, especially necessary as many level-crossings are not protected by gates and often, particularly in the West, the railway line passes right along the main street. Lying awake at night, perhaps a thousand miles from the sea, and listening to the engine breaking the stillness, I often thought how much like the siren of a large ocean liner it sounded.

Nevertheless, the American highways are the main arteries of the nation. There are over 3,000,000 miles of roadway in the country ranging from dirt-surfaced side roads, and board roads to combat the shifting desert sands, to newly constructed 'super highway' turnpikes. Road haulage and extremely efficient bus services are successfully competing with the railways, but it is the car, or automobile, which really

dominates American life. Life seems to centre on the car. In many cities one can do the weekly shopping, cash a cheque at the bank, see a film or have a restaurant meal (brought on a tray which is fixed to the car door), all without getting out of the car. Motels, or groups of chalets where motorists can stay a night; innumerable 'gasoline' stations, where neatly clad attendants clean your windscreen and check your tyre pressure while another gives you the needed petrol; the ever-present roadside advertisements: all recognize the commercial value of this huge movement.

Incidentally, among many ingenious types of highway advertising, one famous shaving-cream company faces the motorist with signs a few hundred yards apart, to be read in quick succession thus: "A man who passes"—"On hills or curves"—"Is not a man with iron nerves"—"He's crazy!"—"Use X-shave". Or, another time—"Just this once"—"And just for fun"—"We'll let you finish"—"What we've begun!"

All means of travel are used and with distances often so great, civil aviation has developed tremendously over the past thirty years. The U.S. railroads maintain a comprehensive network but have lost trade to air and road transport, despite much improved techniques. One modern display train, "The Train of Tomorrow", that I saw touring the country, incorporated every new device, including transparent observation domes on an upper deck for uninterrupted sightseeing, snack bars and private lounges. The deep siren-roar of the old steam locomotives, with their clanging bells, is gradually being replaced by the shrill scream of the diesel-

Many highways are maintained by the Federal Government, but individual States have widely different traffic laws, so speed-limits vary enormously, as do such important details as the colour-sequence of traffic lights. To add to the confusion of a transcontinental trip in the United States there are the four Time Zones, which range from five to eight hours behind Greenwich. Each State issues its own car licence plates, some getting in a little advertising at the same time, for example, "Maine—Vacationland", and "New Mexico—Land of Enchantment". It is a common game among motorists on a long trip to 'collect' these signs, attempting to see all forty-eight in as short a time as possible. I noticed too that when driving a car with a Massachusetts licence plate in the western States, most drivers of other New England cars, far from home, stopped to compare travel notes or hooted cheerfully in passing.

This ease of movement has also stimulated the 'convention habit'. Conventions held by trade, professional and labour organizations, as well as such bodies as Rotary Inter-

national and fraternal orders like the Elks and Shriners, have an important integrating effect, mixing men from all over the country for a few days' 'get-together'.

There is, too, a great economic unifying force. In the vast single free-trade area there are the chain-stores (of the Woolworth type, known as the "Five & Ten", which dates from the times when all articles were priced at five or ten cents) and the general effect of nationwide advertising. These factors certainly cause a rather superficial uniformity throughout the country by an imposition of common standards, but they also have a deeper effect.

Much of the advertising is achieved through the medium of the press and radio services, both of which assist unification in many ways. Because of the vast coverage area, there are no national newspapers in the sense that we know them: even the *New York Times*, probably the most widely read of them all, has a daily circulation of well under 1,000,000 copies. The emphasis is laid on the local or regional paper; but, offsetting the sectionalism

*Though neither the President nor his Cabinet Ministers are subjected to a regular 'question time' in Congress, newspaper correspondents have compensating access to them, voicing the whole nation's enquiries. President Truman's weekly Press Conference pursues him from Washington to Key West*

*International News Photo*





that inevitably results, it must be noted that most use the syndicated news agencies, Associated Press for example. Similarly, the feature-pages of the local paper invariably include the writings of the well-known syndicated columnists, ranging from the sound political commentaries of Walter Lippman to the gossip of Walter Winchell. Comic strips, the 'funnies', are syndicated too, and the adventures of Dagwood, Blondie and the rest are reproduced simultaneously for all the nation to see.

Although a large percentage of the several hundred radio stations, in a parallel manner, use much of their time for broadcasting local interest items, the overall influence of the larger networks like C.B.S. and N.B.C. is more important on balance. Nationwide talks, competitions and, again, advertising, inevitably create some uniform ideas all over the Union—ideas that may vary from political views to a reluctant acknowledgement that a certain brand of cigarettes is made from the finest tobacco. With the advent of television, another influence is at work, ably supple-

menting the radio. The recent televising of some Federal Government proceedings and U.N. activities has brought viewers much closer to national and international problems, stimulating thought and breaking down the isolation caused by distance.

As another force imposing uniformity of outlook, the film has had a marked effect on a 'movie'-minded people, assisted by a veritable welter of pictorial magazines. Films generally portray an unreal American life: unreal by the addition of glamour, normally in so subtle a manner that the fan can quite happily imagine similar personal experience. An internal process is thus inevitable, but it must be remembered that the same films are used by audiences in other countries as a measuring-rod for 'ordinary' American life. Wholesale acceptance at face value can often be extremely misleading, just as the Hollywood-style 'Britain' bears little real resemblance to our own country.

Finally, in a land where it is probably taken more seriously than anywhere else in the world, sport is a major unifying force

*Television helps to bring national events before a nationwide public. A department store's shop-window receiver enables passers-by to see and hear the Security Council's proceedings in New York*

By courtesy of United States Information Service





Gerald H. Ho

*Baseball is the most influential of the many sports in which every American shares a keen interest: no social distinctions or racial prejudices prevent the best players from becoming public heroes*

Participation in, or appreciation of, sport is an essential trait of the American, one to be developed or acquired by the newcomer to the scene. In turn, through the year, the national interest is focused on baseball, football, basketball, ice-hockey and the rest. The fact that at times this interest rather overreaches itself, as in the ludicrous 'undercover professionalism' so prevalent in college football, only emphasizes its potency. A love of sport and appreciation of individual prowess can override many prejudices, even the deep-rooted ones, as was shown when baseball heroes like Babe Ruth, Joe di Maggio, Ted Williams and Lou Boudreau were joined in the public favour by Jackie Robinson, a Negro, one of the first to be admitted to play in the 'big leagues'.

All these forces I have mentioned are working to make the United States one nation, but the perfect union must embrace some degree of local and regional autonomy. Fortunately, regional diversity is inevitable and this will serve to strengthen the unity, by valuable infusions which maintain virility and prevent stagnation.

Not far from Boston, housed on a college

campus, there is a large plaster relief model of the United States. Sixty-five feet from Maine to California and forty-five feet from Michigan to Texas, it is accurately constructed for horizontal scale (four miles to the inch) and earth's curvature, but incorporates the exaggeration of vertical scale necessary in each part. Looking down on this correctly oriented map, from a surrounding balcony which is a figurative 700 miles above the earth, I was reviewing my impressions when the curator arrived. After introductions she told me that I should have been studying the panorama from the eastern balcony, and then explained, delighted at my obvious puzzlement, that it had been noticed that visitors invariably chose a viewpoint in relation to their home area. Californians used the western side to get their familiar angle of view, Texans lined the south balcony and so on. It was yet another of the countless reminders that inside the U.S.A. are peoples with widely varied points of approach to the same thing. Yet they are undoubtedly creating a unified nation, with a national motto that speaks for itself: "E Pluribus Unum".





All photographs by the author

*Bamboo has innumerable uses in many parts of the world: this Assam village is largely made of it*

# Bamboos in Mountain Assam

by C. R. STONOR

IT is a commonplace of history that wherever a group of peoples have made an outstanding success of their racial affairs there has usually been some feature of their environment that has been of conspicuous help to them in making possible their way of life.

One of the most characteristic and universally spread features of vegetation throughout the moister parts of Asia is the bamboo in all its myriad forms. Throughout the eastern ranges of the Himalayas or along the Burma border one gets some idea of its vast importance in nearly every aspect of tribal life. Up and down the steep ranges from sea level almost to the snow line there are bamboos on all sides, of every size and form; and each

village that one enters affords evidence of the ingenuity displayed by the mountain tribesmen in turning this abundance to advantage.

For implements and weapons of all kinds it is invaluable; when there was no metal it must have been even more in demand to provide spear-heads, knives, fire-hardened arrow-tips and a useful weapon of war known as the *panji*, consisting of sharp spikes or splinters hidden along paths and among undergrowth through which an enemy was likely to pass. The extreme ease of fashioning them must have been a potent factor in the development of the peoples of this region, especially in view of their efficiency in hunting, an aspect of bamboo still further enhanced



*Giant Bamboo in flower in the Naga hills. It may take up to sixty years to mature, and after it has done so the tall graceful tapering branches twist and crumple and the clump dies away. As soon as the seeds ripen rats appear in swarms to eat them, sometimes with disastrous results, since the rats afterwards turn on village crops*



by its adaptability for all sorts of traps and snares, including the construction of dams and weirs for trapping fish.

Perhaps its greatest advantage as a building-material apart from ease of handling is that it can be used with a minimum of labour: if one compares the minute mud-huts of some tribal peoples who do not work bamboo with the spacious dwellings of the Nagas or Garos one cannot but feel that this must be a very real factor in promoting their standard of life.

Fire-lighting is perfectly simple with bamboo: a slit is made in a small length of dried stem, a thong of bark from a less brittle piece is pulled to and fro through the slit and a few minutes' hard sawing ignites shreds of tinder at the point of friction. Cooking is done by cutting a length of green bamboo,

filling it with rice or other grain and simply putting it on the fire. The moisture of the stem prevents it burning before the food is cooked.

Universal provider though the bamboo undoubtedly is, it has its disadvantages and indeed can be a serious menace. As soon as the seeds ripen forest rats of various kinds start to eat them and the rats increase in prodigious numbers. Having exhausted the bamboo seeds they turn to the rice and other cereals which form the backbone of hill agriculture. Very often they do appalling damage to standing crops.

During the years 1945-8 the flowering of one species occurred over some 5000 square miles of the Himalayas. So enormously did the rats increase and such was their destruction

of crops that at least one large village was totally broken up, reduced to semi-starvation and the whole population compelled to move elsewhere. Old men of the tribe, who had prophesied the great flowering and its consequences two years before it started, estimated that it would be three or four seasons before things were back to normal.

In another part of the Naga hills the flowering of 1950 was known as the "Tiger Year" because tigers always seem to gather in the flowering area, presumably attracted by the presence of the rats. The Garo people of the western end of the Assam hills have a saying to sum up the whole cycle: "Bamboo seeds turn into rats".



*A tribesman in Assam working in a bamboo grove. Bamboo is not a tree but a giant grass. It is often cultivated but is usually found growing wild in different forms according to the climate: the Giant Bamboo of the hotter levels, reaching up to eighty feet; the creeping species of colder hills, which grows in dense thickets; the little feathery forms only a foot or two in height; and the kind which climbs up forest trees*



Though very useful for building, bamboo has one disadvantage: it is highly inflammable. A lighted brand falling from the hearth may destroy a village in an hour. Yet even this is only regarded as a casual mishap by the tribesmen of Burma or Assam. With the building-materials close to hand and relations and friends to help, reconstruction is quickly started. (Above) A house the morning after it was burnt to ashes. (Right) Working bamboo into planks for the flooring of a house. The planks are woven into a wattle like the one by the wall in the background





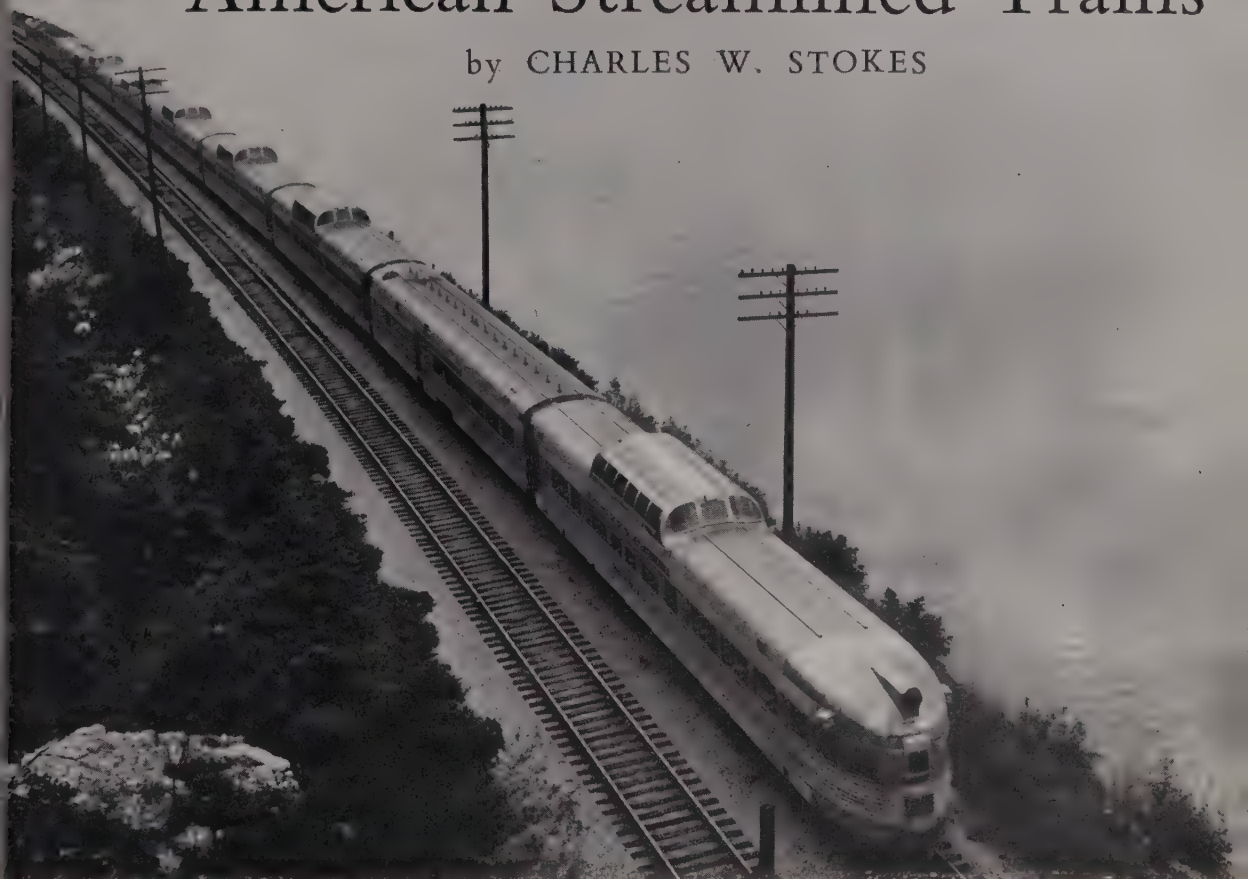


*Bamboo is the universal provider to many of the mountain tribes. Besides the more obvious ones of house-building, tools and weapons, there is a great variety of other uses to which bamboo can be put. (Left) Shredded shoots drying in the sun to be stored for food in the cold season. (Below, left) Paring down a Giant Bamboo to make a water-container. Traditional knowledge and rule-of-thumb techniques come naturally to the Assamese to whom working in bamboo is simplicity itself. (Below, right) An Apa Tani tribeswoman holding a basket down with her feet while she weaves it with bamboo fibre*



# American Streamlined Trains

by CHARLES W. STOKES



*By courtesy of Burlington Lines*

## *The Burlington's Twin Cities Zephyr, with Vista-Domes*

*The leading part played by the railways in promoting the development of the United States is now overshadowed by civil aviation and road transport. But far from abandoning the stage to these competitors, they are offering a challenge typified by the new streamlined trains. The author was European Public Relations Officer for the Canadian Pacific Railway Company from 1929 to 1951*

THIS article may be said, in a sense, to have begun writing itself, to the clicking of railway wheels, in the State of Montana. Through the passes of the Rockies, where once the 'covered wagons' of the pioneers had toiled, our long glistening streamliner was descending to the rolling grasslands of the Missouri River country. Until very recently these passes had echoed and re-echoed to the roar of the steam-engine's siren—that deep-throated clamour which to some of us is part of the Old West tradition—heralding a string of railway coaches little removed in design from the contemporaries of the local stage-coach at the time when Chief Sitting Bull incited his Indians to the massacre of Custer's men. Now the hills were assailed by the

shrill scream of a diesel whistle; now we were being conveyed in a contraption of stainless steel, rather like an aeroplane on wheels, so that one looked round instinctively for a blonde stewardess.

We had left Seattle the previous afternoon; tomorrow afternoon we would be in Chicago. This bare statement conceals the fact that if we had been in other than a streamliner, we would not be in Chicago until the morning after tomorrow, and that we were, indeed, travelling at an average speed of slightly over 49 miles per hour. While this may sound very unadventurous in an age conditioned to far higher speeds, it should be explained that the average was being maintained for 45 hours, over a distance of 2211 miles, and with 24





*Courtesy of Burlington Lines*

Of all the features of streamlined diesel trains introduced by American railways to counter the competition of the aeroplane, long-distance bus and privately owned car, the most spectacular is the new type of observation car. These have a gallery at an upper level with windows on all sides and are called by a variety of exotic names — stratodome, astra-dome, vista-dome, planetarium, skytop solar lounge or "Pleasure Dome: top of the Super, next to the stars"—which mean much the same thing. Each provides the glamorous atmosphere which is an added lure to a public susceptible to advertising. (Left) The California Zephyr's domes give a view of the Rockies. (Below) Interior of the stratodome on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad's new "Columbian" trains



*By courtesy of Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company*

intermediate stops. The last lap of the journey, from St Paul to Chicago, we were to finish triumphantly at over 63 m.p.h. for 427 miles; and as a further explanation to British readers, that famous train the "Royal Scot", with a running distance of 401 miles, averages barely 50 m.p.h. even during the summer speed-up.

Our diesel locomotive pulled a load, at this speed, of four sleeping cars, two dining cars, four coaches, a baggage car and an observation-lounge car, with a total count of about 300 passengers and 30 staff. Had we been making the journey on the "Olympian Hiawatha" of the Milwaukee Line instead of the "Empire Builder" of the Great Northern, we should have had a "Skytop Lounge".

Simultaneously with the "Empire Builder", some hundred or more streamliners were racing over the whole of the United States, in a gallant mass attempt to attract passengers back to the railways. In a fascinating booklet issued by the Association of American Railroads, *Named Passenger Trains*, I find at least 116. Not all of them are necessarily long-distance trains; in fact, 25 of these aristocrats of travel have runs of less than 300 miles. Jointly, their average speed is nearly 10 per cent faster than that of a comparable British group. The 116 streamliners travel (I found with the aid of an adding machine) a total distance of 92,752 miles in 1853 hours 14 minutes. Unless my arithmetic is in error, this is 50.05 m.p.h. Five of these streamliners average over 60 m.p.h.: the fastest, the "Twin Cities 400", from Chicago to Minneapolis, averages 65.12. These speeds are, of course, those registered from start to finish, ignoring any particular 'bursts' over favourable sections. Fastest of the California trains is the "City of Los Angeles", of the Chicago North Western—Union Pacific, with the remarkable figure of 57.84 m.p.h.

A similar job performed on Bradshaw reveals that the 51 trains of which British Railways are apparently proudest, for they are the only ones that have been christened with names, cover together on their summer schedule 11,197 miles in 240 hours 49 minutes, an average of 46.49 m.p.h. Our very fastest British train is now the Tees-Tyne Pullman from King's Cross to Newcastle, at 55.17 m.p.h.

Outstanding among American streamliners are the dozen "trans-continentals" (using that term rather loosely, for the United States has no railway running under a single administration from ocean to ocean, whereas Canada has two) which by various routes reach the Pacific Coast, and vie with one another in cutting running times by seconds. They are

revitalizing a mode of travel which some people think is already half obsolete, and because of that are becoming a new social factor. They are making it smart again to travel by train as they stand invitingly at the terminal, their glittering racehorse lines the cynosure of envious crowds. A combination of high speed and fine rolling-stock, they can offer a fighting challenge to competitors. For example, before it was streamlined, the "Empire Builder" took 58 hours instead of 45—the former time being the same, to within an hour, as the bus takes now. By plane, the same journey takes 10½ hours, plus about two more for the conveyance to and from airports. From St Paul to Chicago the train journey used to take about 13 hours, and nearly everyone did the trip by night, to save boredom. Now, I am told, nearly everyone does it by day in under seven hours.

What exactly is a streamliner? "Streamline" itself is a very loose term, used of many things where some other word might be more appropriate. Used of trains, it means to the British a style of design, particularly locomotive design, that lessens wind resistance. To Americans it means a train of cars of light-weight metal, generally stainless steel, matched as to contours, of a superlative comfort, and hauled usually—though not invariably—by a diesel-electric locomotive capable of high speeds.

Railways are sometimes regarded—especially for passenger transport—as an old-fashioned means of locomotion. The rather grim surroundings of some railways provide perhaps some justification for that viewpoint. There is also the undeniable fact that those who design railway travel have tended, until quite recently, to concentrate more upon engineering problems than upon human comfort. They have been producing better locomotives, bigger bridges and more ingenious signalling, but have left the passenger vehicle very much as it was in Edwardian days. Meantime, of course, competition in passenger haulage has become very "streamlined". There is the aeroplane, whose graceful slender lines are one of its own best advertisements; the long-distance bus, whose seats, cushions and lighting are so much more pleasing than the average railway coach's, and at a lower travel cost; and above all, there is the privately owned, personally driven automobile.

America possesses approximately 29 per cent of the world's railway mileage. Railroading in a country of such vast distances has never quite lost its romantic atmosphere. There still cling memories of the great west-





*By courtesy of Pennsylvania Railroad Company*



*By courtesy of United States Information Service*

The word "streamline" is variously interpreted: one meaning is clearly evident from a comparison between the smooth contours of the diesel-electric locomotive on the Chicago, Milwaukee, St Paul-Minneapolis route (above) and a steam engine (left), complete with cow-catcher, bell, smoke-stack, pistons and other protuberances which lend a certain grandeur but little grace to its lines. Although it is the streamliners which feature in the advertisements, steam is responsible still for hauling the vast majority of American trains

(Right) The latest version of a relatively old-established feature on American trains: the observation lounge at the back of the "Twin Cities Zephyr", which carries a hostess, known as a "Zephyrette". (Below) The dome occupies the central section of the lounge cars. Below it, on the "Super Chief", is a luxuriously fitted bar. The interiors of these trains are as streamlined as the outside



By courtesy of Burlington Lines



By courtesy of Santa Fe Railway





by courtesy of Canadian National Railways

*The best that could be done in 1859: this coach, built for the Prince of Wales' visit to America the following year, was fitted with silk blinds, marble-topped tables and folding upper berths*

ward march of settlement of last century, of stage-coaches and Deadwood Dick, of remarkable construction jobs which are still a part of American folklore. From 1880 to 1920 in particular—the latter year could be said, roughly, to be the peak of railroading—mileage practically tripled. To this era we owe one of the world's most celebrated trains, the New York Central's "Twentieth Century Limited", from New York to Chicago. Inaugurated in 1902, it was the first of the "extra fare" trains, with a charge, over and above the normal fare, for the smartness of using the flyer.

But the decline set in. Of all present-day travel in the United States, 80 per cent is said to move by private automobile. Of the remainder, only 12 per cent moves by train. Since 1932 about 1800 miles of new railway track have been constructed, while in the same period over 23,000 miles (mostly, it is true, unprofitable branch lines) have been abandoned.

You do not have to probe very deeply into his national character to know that the

American is exceedingly fond of gadgets—almost any kind of gadgets—and that he is very fond of modernization. This he prefers to call "re-styling"; since to him "modernization" implies some reluctance, rather than eagerness, to accept changes in taste. In the realm of engineering, the American is inclined to be rather sceptical of traditional forms and wants to "re-style" them. The kind of ship he likes best, it has been said, is the kind that looks like something else. Above all, he is very susceptible to advertising, especially when it is well done and when the commodity itself is attractively "packaged".

The streamliner train is a frontal attack upon most of these susceptibilities. It certainly is a triumph of packaging, for it embodies style, slickness and speed. Modernization may be said to have begun about twenty years ago, with air-conditioning of railway coaches, now practically universal. Then followed the development of the diesel-electric locomotive, actually used as long ago as 1925, but for the first ten years or so only



for shunting in railway yards. The next step was the utilization of light-weight metals in passenger-car construction, followed by the complete re-styling of passenger cars themselves. And finally there came the "Train of Tomorrow".

The last, oddly enough, originated in the least expected quarter—the automobile trade, which would not normally be solicitous of the welfare of a competitor. But in point of fact many of the diesels that the railways were already buying in large numbers were being manufactured in automobile factories, and it was to the fertile mind of one such manufacturer that the idea of the "dome car" occurred.

The story goes that a vice-president of the General Motors Corporation, making a wartime journey by train, was invited in that famous gesture to celebrities to travel on the locomotive. His particular trip was through the canyons of the Colorado River. Seated high up in the driver's cab, he commented loudly on the fact that any average traveller would covet that seat and its magnificent views, and would be very willing to pay extra. So in the following year the first "vista-dome" car was constructed, and later embodied in the "Train of Tomorrow", a group of cars which toured the United States and Canada in triumph in 1947.

The central feature is that the car is built on two levels, like a motor-bus, except that the upper level is a gallery and not a floor, and that it does not extend the full length of the car. Made largely of toughened glass, it gives an extraordinary view in every direction.

*Spurred by competition, the American streamliners are now providing foam-rubber seats for their "coach" class passengers. Adjustable backs and foot-rests enable these to travel in great comfort, even at night, on the longest runs*

(American railway tunnels, it should be said, are higher and fewer than European).

Actually, very few trains have any kind of "dome"—stratodome, astra-dome, planetarium, skytop solar lounge, or such other fancy name—but the advertising value is terrific. "Pleasure Dome—top of the Super, next to the stars", says a recent full-page advertisement of the "Super Chief", which hurtles across south-western America, from Chicago to Los Angeles, at a speed, over all, of some 56 miles an hour.

The word "diesel" is virtually inseparable from the streamliner idea. Of our 116 selected streamliner trains, only 13 are powered by steam, and a comparison of the two methods of traction shows about 4 m.p.h. average in favour of diesels. Diesels are increasing very rapidly in use. From a proportion to "steamers" ten years ago of 2 per cent,

*By courtesy of Great Northern Railway*







SLEEPING CARS NOW IN USE ON THE NEW YORK CENTRAL RAILROAD

By courtesy of New York Central Railroad Company

*Sleepers on most American trains are still basically similar to those of the 1860s, having tiered berths divided from the aisle by a curtain: even the smallest separate compartment on a streamliner, the "roomette" (below), is a great improvement. With its sliding door it is a miracle of compactness*



By courtesy of Great Northern Railway





*By courtesy of the Pennsylvania Railroad*

*Twin beds are achieved by folding away the partition between adjoining compartments in the very newest development of sleeping accommodation on the Pennsylvania Railroad's "Broadway Limited"*

they have increased to 40 per cent now. Their advantages in fuel and operating costs are so enormous as to overcome their higher capital cost.

In the matter of rolling stock the reformers have gone a long way beyond merely streamlining the exterior. Significantly, they have devoted great attention to the "coach" class. American railroad travel divides roughly into two classes, first and coach. Not only is there a difference in the fare, but a first-class ticket is necessary before you can buy a sleeper or, by day, a parlour-car or observation-car seat. Coach class, which relatively yields the railroad the greater profit, has been also the most vulnerable to the competition of the inter-urban bus.

You will find the streamliner coach very much re-styled. It probably has "Sleepy Hollow" seats that tilt back at will, with individual foot-rests, individual reading lights and "picture windows"—meaning plate glass ones, with no vertical sash. Some have a

"Tip Top Tap" car—though Heaven knows what the complications must be when crossing the boundaries of States with different licensing laws! Some have two dining cars, one of which is a "lunch counter" or "coffee shop" (snack bar) specializing in "plate lunches". Most remarkable of all, some of the all-night streamliners have no sleepers, but are composed of "coaches" only: such as the "Southerner", from New York to New Orleans, spending one night on the road, and "El Capitan", from Chicago to Los Angeles (extra fare \$5.00), spending two. The tilting seats make the journey at least as comfortable as a long aeroplane trip and you can while away the time on "El Capitan" with radio music or leave your children in the care of a nurse.

Most overdue for modernization was the sleeping car—that characteristic American institution which figures in story, drama, film and joke-book. Apart from a few minor gadgets and a rather more refined taste in



ornamentation, the basic design had not changed much since George M. Pullman constructed his first model in 1858. The sleeper was built round the idea of the "standard berth", serving both day and night duty by the simple process of sliding a double day-seat together, making it up with bedding, and hooking a curtain in front. That green curtain, behind which he or she undressed, was the only thing that separated the passenger from the aisle. There were, it is true, a few "compartments" where one could retire behind a door; but by and large, all the privacy possible was behind that curtain. Europeans, used to the small locked bedrooms of the "Flying Scotsman" or the "Blue Train", were usually horrified at their first encounter with Transatlantic night travel.

The fact that so many Americans were willing to pay extra for the few "compartments" caused the railways to realize eventually that the open sleeper was an unnecessary inheritance. Hence there evolved several types of compartment, some analogous to the European, some far more elaborate. The modern "drawing room", for example, with its armchairs and divan beds that let down from the wall, is as luxurious and as large as the average stateroom on an average liner. The latest and most interesting development is the "roomette", the smallest unit that provides a door. With cunningly contrived cupboards, wash-basin, and individual heating and air-conditioning control, it is a marvel of compact space. The occupant, when he decides to retire for the night, pulls down his own bed, already made up with bedding, from the end wall. It completely fills the roomette, and after his first experience the traveller realizes that undressing and ablutions must precede such pulling-down. The door is a sliding one—which reveals the only thing the designers overlooked; for between it and the bed there is only about four inches, a space so narrow as to necessitate the provision of an outside curtain in which one could bulge out into the aisle that part of one's anatomy which would naturally bulge out as one bent over a bed preparatory to climbing in.

The roomette is perhaps not to be recommended to sufferers from claustrophobia; but it has become outstandingly popular. The standard berth still exists—I believe it is still the basis of all sleeping-car rates; but on one famous transcontinental streamliner train which I checked there were, out of a maximum of 103 sleeper beds, only 16 standard. Of the others, 48 were roomettes.

Does the streamliner pay? Is it a material

factor in enabling American railways to maintain their passenger-carrying trade in face of competition from planes, buses and privately owned cars?

To the first of these questions the answer is undoubtedly "Yes". Two years ago the New York engineering firm of Coverdale and Colpitts made, on the instructions of a car manufacturer, an investigation into streamline train economics. Their report on 58 such trains shows that they earned a gross revenue of \$97,751,735; and that after deducting what the railway expert calls "out-of-pocket" costs, that is, costs which would be eliminated if the train were not operated, there remained a revenue of over \$48,000,000. As their total running distance for the same period was 24,879,000 miles, this means that every mile these trains ran produced a profit of very nearly two dollars.

The answer to the second question is not so easy to give. It has to be remembered that during World War II all the other forms of passenger transport in the United States were nearly brought to a standstill; and that in addition to civilian travel and that of service personnel on leave, the railways had to handle practically all the vast movement of troops. Thus what are called "revenue passenger-miles" went up from 19 billion in 1940 to 48 billion in 1942 and 90 billion in 1944. In 1950 the corresponding figure was still 27 billion passenger-miles, despite the enormously increased competition of other forms of transport compared with what American railways had to face before the war. This last figure represents the 12 per cent that I mentioned above, out of the 17 or 18 per cent of all American travel for which the railways have to compete with air and bus lines when the privately owned automobiles have taken their lion's share.

The ability of the railways to hold on to this, in the circumstances, considerable share may be credited mainly to the streamlined trains; but not entirely. It is true that their advertising value, greater comfort and higher speeds all help to attract more passenger traffic than their conventional predecessors and that the operating costs of their diesel engines are far lower. During the past five or six years, however, the operating plant of American railways as a whole has been largely rehabilitated and many improvements have been made—in signals, in rail and roadbed materials, in traffic control and other methods—all contributing to greater efficiency and economy and thus to the competitive challenge offered by the railways, in which streamliners have played so notable a part.